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The Presbyterian Record

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JANUARY 2016

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FAMILY

Mourning
Miscarriages

Shouting for More

When it comes to women in
ministry, we've come a long
way, but is it far enough?

“I won’t desecrate beauty with cynicism anymore.
I won’t confuse critical thinking with a critical spirit,
and I will practice, painfully, over and over, patience and
peace until my gentle answers turn away even my own wrath.
I will breathe fresh air while I learn, all over again, grace freely
given and wisdom honoured; and when my fingers fumble,
when I sound flat or sharp, I will simply try again.”

—Sarah Bessey



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FOR THE RECORD—Guest Editor

A Real Minister

Happy to help, to serve, to advocate.

By Nancy Cocks

The

Record invited me to comment on how things are for women in ministry these days, as we approach the 50th anniversary of General Assembly's decision to admit women as teaching and ruling elders. The answer depends on which women you ask. Some will say, "Things are fine." Others will likely say, "Better. But ..." Yet to have a full picture, you'd have to ask women serving on sessions and in the Order of Diaconal Ministries. You'd have to canvass young women just beginning and older women who entered ministry in mid-life. Would women who serve mostly with men as colleagues on session and in presbytery have different experiences from those who serve where numbers of men and women are more evenly balanced? What about women who have faced conflict with well-connected colleagues? Did they experience fair process? And what would women who have left active ministry say? Why did they leave?

Speaking as a woman who has served in five presbyteries and held some important leadership positions ecumenically and educationally, I can say I have found the world of ministry more supportive for women in the last 15 years than the first 15 years of my service. Well I remember the evening a retiring minister belittled a woman moderating presbytery as some new



I am grateful to friends in Christ who stood up for me so fairness prevailed

and unacceptable aberration. I was young then, and I was shocked. Happily, though, one of the senior men in the court stood up and took his colleague to task, reminding us all that the moderator of every court deserves respect, no matter who is in the office.

I have benefitted from such advocacy over the years—from two elders who stood up for me at my first General Assembly when I became a target in the debate over "liberty of conscience;" from members of my presbytery who took to task a man who'd spread innuendo about me across the church

when I was misquoted in a newspaper; from colleagues who encouraged me to finish my doctoral work when bias skewed the process. I am grateful to these and other friends in Christ who stood up for me so fairness prevailed.

Yet I expect some women colleagues did not experience such timely support and encouragement. Is this why some have left active participation in congregations and courts? The church should hear their stories, too, so we can reflect on what collegiality and partnership in ministry means, especially when disagreements arise or ministries end.

Thirty-four years after leaving my first pastoral charge to do doctoral work, I recall an anecdote which still makes me smile. A few Sundays after I'd moved, an experienced male colleague was presiding over the service.

A five-year-old frowned and said to his grandmother, "That's not a real minister."

"Yes," she said, "he is."

"No," the child insisted, "a real minister is a lady with puppets."

Well, I'm still the lady with puppets, happy to serve wherever I'm called, but hoping I can be an advocate, too, whenever the Spirit and a colleague needs my voice! ☸

Rev. Dr. Nancy Cocks serves St. John's, Medicine Hat, Alta. Read her full-length editorial on our website.

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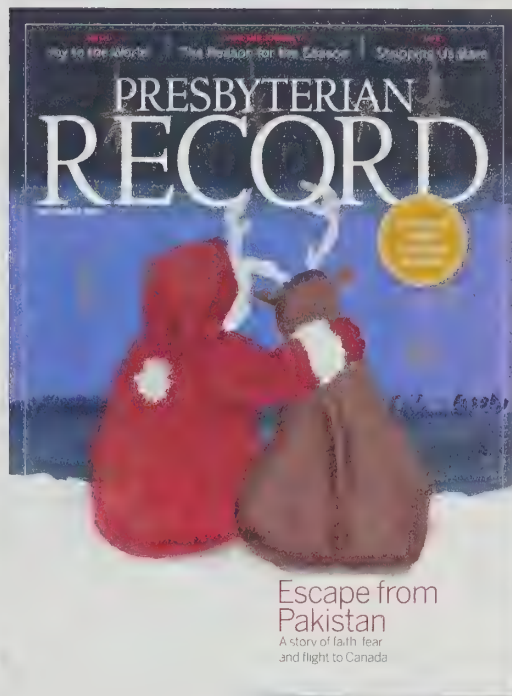
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Letters



WRITE TO US:

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More Time Needed

Re Study Guide on Sexuality Now
Available, December 2015

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has called us to embark on a year of study on the issue of human sexuality. It provided the lengthy study guide at the end of October and wants responses by the middle of February. At the same time it wants input on the newly approved statement on the theology of mission, and input on end of life issues. I only have a Cape Breton education but even there, although three and a half months (especially in winter) may feel like a year, the calendar math still doesn't work. I need a full-time job to work through all these materials on this timetable to give a reasonable response but unfortunately the one I have now

expects me to give attention to it, especially through Advent. In the words of Johnny Cash, "I hear the train a comin'" or the Beatles, "Help!"

DAN MACKINNON, ORLEANS, ONT.

Clergy Pay On Par with Average

The Conference Board of Canada recently published "Inside and Outside the Academy: Valuing and Preparing PhDs for Careers, a study of the employment prospects for persons with PhDs." The study (using 2007 data) revealed the average working Canadian with a Master's degree earned \$56,587. This is of interest to Canadian Presbyterians because most clergy in the denomination have Master's degrees.

Comparing clergy stipends with the salaries other employed persons >

First Thoughts

LETTERS, continued

receive is complicated by the fact that the housing portion of clergy remuneration is non-taxable. But with the aid of internet apps it is possible to do the calculations to allow for a comparison. (The figures used below are for a minister in Ontario, but it would not be significantly different in the other provinces.)

In 2007, a newly ordained Presbyterian minister in Canada receiving the minimum stipend was paid \$31,801 plus a housing allowance or manse worth \$15,000 (\$12,000 a year plus utilities, which is on the low side) on top of the stipend. That remuneration package would have been equivalent to a salary of \$51,700; somewhat under what the average Canadian with a Master's degree was earning, but in the ballpark.

In 2007, a minister with eight years' experience and therefore with full increments was earning \$37,617 plus a housing allowance or manse. Again assuming a housing allowance of \$15,000, that works out to being equivalent to a salary of \$58,400. That figure is a bit above what the average person with a Master's degree was earning in Canada.

Why do all this math? While I recognize there are factors beyond

education involved in determining what a minister is paid, the math indicates the stipend grid of the PCC is in line with what persons with Master's degrees earn in Canada.

PETER BUSH, WINNIPEG

Watch Your Words

Re On the Road, November 2015

This article indicates "these are not peasant refugees" in bold print, but are people of middle class having an education and intelligence.

In my dictionary, the word peasant means: "farmer, a person occupied in agriculture." To be a farmer, you need intelligence, education and a sharp pencil! Without these worthy people we would have nothing to eat and only some of our clothing. And I believe they pay taxes, vote and go to church or mosque!

I strongly resent the inference that they are not regarded as possible migrants or refugees. On the whole it was an informative article.

ELIZABETH TAYLOR, CALGARY, ALTA.

Andrew Faiz responds:

Dear Elizabeth,

Thank you for keeping my language honest. Glad you liked the article, for the most part.

Thank You for the Record!

Re On the Road, November 2015

You should win an award for this. You've put faces on this situation; I looked at the picture of the Monsour family for a long time. As you say, their faces tell the story. This morning I looked at a print hanging on my dining room wall. It was made by an Ibo friend of ours in 1966 of a similar grouping of faces, young and old, representing the thousands of Ibos who flooded back home fleeing the pogroms in northern Nigeria. They have escaped unimaginable horror but... where to house them? How to feed them?

There is a lot I could say about parallel experiences of my own, but this article is about now, about you people who are in the front line of responding.

I just want to name a few things for which I am very thankful. First, that International Ministries and whoever else was involved had the flexibility to include the refugee influx as part of the Moderator's visit. Second, that David Pandy-Szekeres' amazing network of contacts was able to put you in touch with people close to the action across several borders. Third, that Andrew Faiz is the kind of guy who can walk

Pastor Shep



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along with the refugees, play peeka-boo with the kids, and strike up conversations with their parents. Fourth, that all of you are people who can see the issues for what they are, but still remember how all this seems to folk back home in comfortable, insular Canada. Fifth, that you gave the Inter-church Aid workers such a good profile. Sixth, that you showed the efforts of the local volunteers on display in the touching picture of bananas and juice boxes being shared by Mahad and her family. (In my day it was sardine sandwiches distributed on the tarmac of Enugu airport. The more things change, the more they stay the same.) Finally, that the *Record* gets better with every issue.

Yet again, I'm proud to be a Canadian Presbyterian.

MARJORIE ROSS, TORONTO

Re The Beginning of Life, October 2015

I want to say a tremendous thank you for the many excellent articles in the October issue of the *Record*. In particular I refer to the article by Rev. Tony Plomp who was at one time my minister at the church in Richmond, B.C., and Dr. David Sherbino who was, at one time, minister at the church where I grew up in Woodbridge, Ont.

I have recently referred Rev. Plomp's "The Beginning of Life" to a dear friend who has been fighting a battle with multiple myeloma and further complications, and has had a bone marrow transplant. She has been brave, and I am sure Tony's sharing will be comforting to her, so thank you Rev. Plomp; you, too are in my prayers.

I came so close to not renewing my subscription to the *Record* because I was starting to feel that as a widow and pensioner I could not really afford it. However, since reading the October issue I have come to realize I cannot afford to cancel this worthy subscription. Thank you for the *Record*.

JUNE WILCOX HEALE, VIA FACEBOOK

Expressing Gratitude

Re Ultimate Church Union, Letters, October 2015

I was somewhat taken aback by the suggestion in a recent letter that the Presbyterian Church ought to dissolve itself and unite with either the Roman Catholic or Orthodox churches. Empty pews should never be a justification for such defeatism, rather a challenge to evangelism.

D. SWAN, TORONTO

What Christ Demands

Re Escape from Pakistan, December 2015

My wife (Rev. Shalini Sankaral) and I had the pleasure of meeting the Gills, sharing a meal with them, and hearing their testimony as part of the Mission and Outreach weekend at St. Andrew's, Ajax. It is a very powerful story and one for which we should be incredibly thankful. Outreach is most powerful when it involves reaching out of the confines of our comfortable pews to see the situations in the world around us and to become the comfort that Christ demands we become.

WAYNE SANKARLAL, ONLINE

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POP CHRISTIANITY

Ahlan Wa Sahlan

Strangers welcoming strangers. By Andrew Faiz

The Canadian Forces flight 3129 landed around 11:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 10th last year. The 163 Syrians on board were flying in from Beirut. Upon landing they were taken to a VIP terminal within Toronto's Pearson International Airport. Poline Bytion was on that flight with her four children. "Every step we take, somebody say welcome to us," she told me the next day.

They spent the next several hours being processed by immigration officials. "They asked us many, many questions. Visa. Passport. And they said, 'From now you are Canadian. For two years you cannot leave the country. In three years you can get citizenship.'"

Poline and her children arrived at the hotel after four in the morning. The next day she met her sister Hanna in the hotel lobby. They hadn't seen each other in four years.

Hanna Bytion had spent the previous night in that hotel lobby. She left for home in the wee hours before her sister arrived. The sisters had last met at a brother's wedding in Syria. The civil war was just beginning. Two years later, Poline, a vice-principal at a state school in El Kamshly, left with her children for Beirut. "Bombs. Bombs. Bombs. So many bombs. First bombs only in military places. Then everywhere."

While Hanna was waiting for her sister at the hotel lobby on that



Thursday night, dozens of strangers were at the arrivals gate at the airport. People who had no relationship whatsoever to the Syrians. They knew nothing of the 163 on that armed forces plane.

Kristine and Joja, university students from Guelph, brought Tim Horton's gift cards and a sign with the words, "Welcome to Canada, Eh," along with images of a maple leaf, a Canadian flag and a roll-up-the-rim cup.

Carey and Athena, newly married, came after work with a sign saying, "Welcome to Canada," along with an image of a dove. Athena, herself a recent

immigrant from France, is an itinerant French teacher in Toronto. They wanted to greet the new Canadians.

They never met them, never got a glimpse of them. But they weren't disappointed.

They came to deliver a message of peace. They were each in their own way, with their homemade signs, reacting to impressions of hate and anger they perceived in their world. They sat on uncomfortable seats till past 2 a.m., talking to each other, sharing their own stories, moving past news stories of anti-Muslim, anti-Syrian, anti-refugee rhetoric which assumes terrorism in every heart, and to their own stories, of parents and grandparents, who were once immigrants or refugees to Canada.

Poline and her children

were one of two families on that plane sponsored by folks from the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The next day another plane landed in Montreal with more people sponsored by our church. Despite what they have been through already, these new Canadians have many difficult challenges ahead of them. The road will be long and bumpy, but on their first steps they can be assured a large, unconnected group of strangers greets them with warmth and hope. +

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

BULLETIN

Community and World News



Douglas Rollwage



Wes Denyer

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Meet the 2016 Moderator Nominees

Two names appear on this year's ballot. *By Connie Wardle*

THE NAMES OF Rev. Wes Denyer and Rev. Douglas Rollwage will appear on the ballot for moderator of this year's General Assembly. Both of them are veterans of the church's courts, with lots of experience at local and national levels.

They admitted the moderator's job could be a little tough this year, with discussions of the place of LGBT Presbyterians expected to continue. But both expressed their faith in the process.

"Over the time that the Presbyterian Church tradition has existed we have developed ways of having

those conversations, and we have had difficult discussions in the past and we will have difficult discussions in the future," Denyer said.

"The job of the moderator in any year is to make sure there's clarity about the process, and clarity about what's going on," Rollwage said.

Both ministers took time to answer some questions so you can get to know them a little better. Longer versions of these interviews are available on our website.

Ballots were sent out to presbyteries >

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, continued

in December, and the votes will be counted on April 1. The new moderator will be installed when the General Assembly begins its meeting on June 3 at York University, Toronto.

Rev. Wes Denyer is minister at Rosedale, Toronto. He has served as a clerk, moderator and committee convener at the presbytery level, and has convened a number of national teams including the organization team behind the Stewards by Design conference and the design team behind the Emmaus Conference in 2010.

“What I love about ministry,” he said, “is I have always loved the people that I have had the opportunity to work with. I think particularly of the times when I’ve had the opportunity to work with people who are less well off.”

In his former charge, St. Andrew’s, Brampton, Ont., the congregation ran a food bank that distributed 10,000 packages of food every year. “One of the things I am the most—if I can use the word—the most proud is that we had food bank clients who eventually joined the church and were welcomed into ‘the regular worshipping community’ as opposed to simply being that group of people whom we serve, who come to us for help and we dispense some help to them,” he said. Right now at Rosedale, he noted, the congregation is working to sponsor refugees.

“We live in a world where we’re not isolated from one another and we need to ensure that God’s justice and God’s love is made clear not only in our church community but in the community at large and even in our world.”

As an avid hiker and scuba diver, he said he cares deeply about creation and humanity’s role as stewards of it. He’s also passionate about camping ministries.

When the *Record* asked him about his vision for the future of the church, he said he has experienced worship in

many different kinds of churches, and he expects in the future to see more diversity in worship and perspectives among congregations. Some people prefer the casual, coffee-sipping experience they find in emergent churches, he said, while others resonate with the classic hymn-filled services found in more traditional churches.

“We will get churches that will meet the needs of the people that are there, that will use the gifts and abilities which they have to express their faith and to worship God,” he said. “And I think that too means what we have to do is encourage our churches to be more experimental. To say, what is it that will help people in this particular situation to connect with God?”

“God has created us in such a way that our greatest happiness, our greatest joy, our greatest sense of meaning and fulfillment comes as we live out a life of faith,” he said at the conclusion of the interview. “There have been changes that have happened, there will be changes that come in the future, but I trust that as God has seen us through difficult times in the past, God will see us through this present day and on into the future. I would actually be very worried about the future of the church if it was in my hands or in human hands, but I do think that the reality is it’s in hands that are far larger than ours.”

Rev. Douglas Rollwage

is minister at Zion, Charlottetown. He has moderated presbyteries, has convened and served on many committees at local and national levels, and has acted as a resource person at General Assemblies. He has also led pilgrimages to Israel, Greece and Turkey, which he described as “intensive Bible study courses on-site.”

“My big motivation in ministry is watching the light come on for people,

either through a sermon or a Bible study or through a personal contact or through pilgrimage,” he said.

“It’s wonderful to have a group of people share that experience and come away with their faith just so energized.”

Rollwage said Presbyterianism’s rootedness in scripture is one of the things he loves about this strand of Christ’s church. But, he said, “I think that we have moved away from what we once took for granted.”

“How many people in churches go to Bible study anymore? For me Bible study is more important than Sunday morning. Because on Sunday morning we’ve got, what, 20 minutes to give a sermon, to try and inspire and teach and comfort and lead and direct. In Bible study you’ve got an hour and half.

“For us to move forward with credibility and with true spiritual relevance, I think we need to recapture our love for the Bible. It sounds very old fashioned. But I also think that the Bible is more relevant now than it was a generation ago.”

Canada is now a “post-Christian society” he said, which makes it similar to the “pre-Christian society” in which the New Testament was written.

“Christianity was very much a subculture in the midst of either an uncaring—or if caring then openly hostile—surrounding culture.

“I think now it’s fair to say that we are within either an uncaring or at times openly hostile culture. And the scriptures were written to people in those situations and by people in those situations.

“You don’t have to make the Bible exciting or relevant. It is. We succeed in making it boring and irrelevant. On its own it’s extremely exciting and relevant. We just have to allow it to breathe.” ☛

Connie Wardle is the Record’s senior writer.

New Building Opens at VST

THE VANCOUVER School of Theology, which houses the Presbyterian seminary, St. Andrew's Hall, opened its new, smaller building on Nov. 14.

"Our vision, our calling is to educate and form thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders," said VST Principal Richard Topping during the opening event. "This blessed place is a locale for promise keeping. It is a place where significant and weighty matters take place. Lives are changed here through encounters with people and texts and teachers and scriptures."

The previous VST building at 6000 Iona Drive, while iconic, was approximately 100,000 square feet—far too big for the school's educational requirements.

"It meant that we were more in the business of being a landlord to our tenants than focusing our entire resources on the business of forming and educating thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders for the 21st century," said Shannon Lythgoe, VST's communications and marketing associate. "As well, our new building, at 25,000 square feet, is thoroughly equipped with the technology required to operate an expanded distance education program for the increasing number of students who need or prefer to remain offsite during their training."

And thanks to the real estate market in Vancouver, the sale of the Iona building to the University of British Columbia for \$28 million means VST now has a separate legal endowment trust with more than \$20 million, the revenue of which is available for the ongoing work of the school. 🍀

—Amy MacLachlan

IN THE NEWS

As the first group of Syrian refugees arrived in Toronto in mid-December, Andrew Faiz was at the airport to greet them. Read his column on page 6 to learn about his experiences.



National Offices Celebrate Retirement of Rev. Dr. Herb Gale

Current and former colleagues at the denomination's national offices praised the work and ministry of Rev. Dr. Herb Gale (pictured with his wife, Rev. Dr. Shirley Gale) at a celebration on Dec. 9, 2015. Gale has served for 11 years as associate secretary of Planned Giving, a department that amalgamated with Stewardship in September. In their remarks, colleagues praised his call to ministry and the way in which he embodies grace in his life, work and faith.



PRESBYTERIAN MODERATOR, REV. KAREN HORST (in red) was in Ottawa for the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report on Dec. 15, 2015. Horst was there on the church's behalf, and received a digital version of the report from Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of the TRC. With them are TRC commissioners Chief Wilton Littlechild and Dr. Marie Wilson.

MISSION

Energy and Hope

Building energy efficient homes for low-income families in Edmonton. *By Connie Wardle*

AFTER FOUR YEARS of work and waiting, Westmount Presbyterian in Edmonton is set to become the site of Canada's first zero-net energy townhouse development, providing energy efficient homes for low income and refugee families in the city.

The 16 units, which will range in size from three to five bedrooms, will produce more energy than the families that live in them will use. Solar panels, excellent insulation, high quality windows, geothermal heating, and energy efficient appliances are just some of their features.

They will use about a tenth of the energy of a typical building, according to Peter Amerongen. He's a director and project manager at Habitat Studio, an upscale home development firm, and describes himself as a "bit of a pioneer in building energy efficient housing." He's also a longtime supporter of the Edmonton Inner City Housing Society and the Internet Housing Society, two sister non-profit organizations that design, build and maintain dwellings for low income people in the city.

The housing societies got involved when the church was at a crossroads. The congregation has shrunk over the years, and their 1950s-era brick and cinderblock building was energy inefficient and expensive to retrofit. They worried about the state of the roof. They knew something had to give.

"If we have a major building catastrophe we can't afford to fix it," said Rev. Annabelle Wallace, a retired minister who serves the church



A rendering of the zero-net energy townhouse development.

one-quarter time. "So we needed to do something different."

In the past the congregation had sponsored refugees from Myanmar, and the family of seven lived in the church's manse. Finding affordable homes for large families can be a challenge in a city like Edmonton—something the congregation knew quite well.

The one thing the church had in abundance was land. The church building and manse sit on three city lots in the gentrifying neighbourhood of North Glenora, just across the street from a school.

The church and housing societies eventually worked out a deal: the church will lease its land to Internet for about a dollar a year for 40 years. Internet will demolish the current church and manse, and in their place build the homes and a new, smaller church building for the congregation, with space in the basement for a daycare.

Amerongen volunteered his time to help design the new buildings. Although energy-efficient buildings tend to cost

more to build upfront, they cost much less to operate over the long term.

"I think one of the problems that we've had with getting more people to build buildings like this has been a perception that it's for rich people and I'm really hoping that we can dispel that," he said.

The coalition of church folk, Internet staff, and Amerongen carried out extensive community engagement with several big meetings throughout the four-year planning and design process.

When the group finally took their plan and rezoning application to city council on Oct. 19, several hours had been booked for debate. But no one showed up to speak against it.

"The city council had never seen that before," said Cam McDonald, executive director of the Edmonton Inner City Housing Society. "It's really quite remarkable." +

Connie Wardle is the Record's senior writer. You can find a longer version of this article on our website.

Faith.

Deepening your relationship with God

NEW SERIES

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY

A New Normal

Sharing seeds of faith and life.

By Katie Munnik

WHEN MY FIRST SON was a toddler, he was always hungry. I have photos of him snacking everywhere. At the bus stop. In the park. In the line at the post office. Sitting on the steps of the primary school, waiting for his sister to emerge. Whenever we left the house, I always made sure I brought food for my hungry little guy. He would watch me carefully as I packed our bag, insisting that I didn't just bring one apple along. It always had to be two. One might feel like enough, but two was better. Because, as he would solemnly remind me, when you have two, then you can share.

Now Son Number Two is at the same stage—hungry, growing and wearing his big brother's hand-me-downs. I pull bobbled sweaters down over his yellow head and fold up the cuffs on his jeans, finding myself forgetting and remembering all at once. So many moments to hold onto.

It is New Year's now and we've >

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY, continued

just passed through the season of abundance. Despite the full-to-the-brim hand-me-down box, there seem to be so many new things for the children to wear, along with new piles of books to read, new games, new toys. We had to move furniture on Christmas Eve to make space for the youngest's new play kitchen. The house feels full, and so do I. Contentedly so. It has been a happy season full of memory-making in our new house, jumbling new traditions and old patterns together. We counted our way towards Christmas with an Advent wreath on the table in the kitchen. We baked gingerbread, stollen and shortbread and delivered them round to the new neighbours, then baked more for ourselves. I cooked a turkey for the first time. My parents spent Christmas with us, so we also had the full, exhausting and happy experience of three generations sharing the holidays together. My daughter, nine years old and singing in the choir. My father so proud, so delighted.

But the New Year brings, as it

always must, a return to routine. *Auld claes* and porridge, as my Scottish mum would tell you, and that's frugal January. My son asked why we tell the story of the wise men in January. I couldn't give him a good answer without bending historical fact in favour of a nicely crowded manger scene, but when it comes to narrative sweep, I do like the timing. It fits. The last of the Christmas stories ends with gifts given and then a return home. With the wise men, we begin to travel back to normal. But it isn't quite normal, is it? Because at the far end of their road, they came face-to-face not with the king they sought but with God incarnate in the Christ-child, surprising, confronting, inviting. The promise of salvation, born of the seed of David.

"When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold,

frankincense and myrrh."

Startled by God's own abundance, they opened their treasure chests to celebrate the unexpected gift of the Christ-child among us. Then, wisely and warned, they chose to travel home by another road, avoiding Herod's human trickery. I imagine them packing up their camel-saddlebags, their loads now lightened as their gifts had been given. What else might they carry home now? New maps to old places. Courage, I hope, because they might need it on that darkening road. Compassion, too, found at the sight of the vulnerable child and in the humble eyes of his mother Mary. And faith. I hope that these pilgrim princes would hold fast to a new sense of faith on their long journey into a new sense of normal.

This new year brings a different kind of new normal for me with this new column space. I've perched on these pages before with material from my weekly *Record* blog, the Messy Table, but I think this regular column is going to be a little different. On the Messy Table, I write about the practice of reading the lectionary and the messiness of faithful family living, with a few seasonal recipes and craft ideas thrown in from time to time. Here, I want to focus on stories. I want to write about the intersections between our ancient stories of faith and our daily lives today. I want this to be a place to share those stories—comforting, challenging, surprising. And I also want to share the small details of my life that have been illuminated by the stories of scripture. All these stories might be like apples, small, portable, with seeds hidden inside. And, as my son reminded me, very good for sharing. +

Katie Munnik is author of the weekly blog, the Messy Table, for the Presbyterian Record. She lives in Cardiff, Wales.



BRIARWOOD

Seeking a Minister

Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Beaconsfield, Quebec is an active congregation on the West Island of Montreal that loves children, youth, adults and seniors. We are seeking a minister who is able to work with all ages, connect with young families, is a strong communicator and teacher of the Christian faith, and has a warm heart with a big smile! Our focus on young people and families remains a priority, and our congregation is proud and excited to offer two services each Sunday morning, offering alternate forms of worship for members, adherents and visitors.

If you see yourself in this role, or desire to have further information, we invite you to send your profile to the Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries, Interim Moderator, Telephone (514) 288-5256 Ext.209; Email: rdevries@presbyteriancollege.ca. Our congregational profile can be found at <https://briarwoodpc.wordpress.com>



PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

Concerning Spiritual Gifts

Life in the Spirit makes us religious people.

By Laurence DeWolfe

January 17, 2016

Second Sunday After Epiphany

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

CAN A CHRISTIAN BE SPIRITUAL, but not religious? There's a lot in the scriptures about the Spirit, life in the Spirit, gifts of the Spirit. Religion is only mentioned six times in the NRSV New Testament; "religious" three times.

For all Paul writes about the Spirit and spiritual things, he's a very religious man. In popular use, "religion" connotes a set of beliefs shared in a community of believers.

Many people today see that as a bad thing. They don't want to be told what to believe or where they belong. The word *religio* means, in part, "binding together." Religion is meant to help us order life, keep it together, through practices and beliefs.

In our reading from 1 Corinthians today Paul describes God's Spirit, active in and through believers, for very religious reasons. To build community and keep it together. To fulfil God's purposes in the world. To enable believers to believe.

That doesn't sound like spirituality at all. Yet it's entirely dependent on the Spirit >

PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY, continued

within us. Not our own spirits. Not just any spirit. Not our nature as “spiritual beings,” which we are so often told we are. As far as Paul is concerned we’re not even alive unless God’s Spirit is in us. In the beginning, according to Genesis, our grandparents became beings when God breathed into them. We don’t fulfil God’s purposes for us by trying to be spiritual. We do it by getting busy, in a spiritual power that isn’t ours to begin with.

People of other religions may speak of life as turning from the world, detaching, to go inside, where they will find God. Christians look to see where God has come to reside, and to discover what God is doing. This can’t be done apart from engagement with the world in which God calls us to do God’s work. We can’t do this alone. We are only fully alive in community. Even Christians who choose a contemplative life do it in community. The Spirit enables them to

**There are things
we can do to help
us be more attuned to
the presence of
the Spirit, to God’s
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spiritual practices.
I prefer to call them
means of grace**

withdraw physically so they can focus on the world and pray for it better than most of the rest of us can.

Paul writes about the gifts given to each of us. He uses three synonyms for “gift:” service, activity and manifestation. Words about action, not possession. Outward words, not inward. All for the common good.

To me, that sounds a lot more religious than spiritual. There are things we can do to help us be more attuned to the presence of the Spirit, to God’s activity within and around us, and to God’s will for us. You may like to call them spiritual practices. I prefer to call them means of grace. I’d also rather we learned again to use an old word, instead of trying to speak of spirituality as others do. Piety has had a bad reputation for a long time. Its literal meaning is “fear.” Awe and wonder, really, but with due recognition that God is God and we are not.

If our focus is on ourselves first—and Paul would add, on our spiritual gifts as our possessions—we’re looking in the wrong direction. If we want to find God we start by looking outward, toward and with others. Then we find the Spirit we want to get in tune with, already vibrating within us and moving us forward with purpose.

You might say I’m just playing with words. What does it matter if we speak of spirituality, or of being spiritual people? It matters to me because our Christian understanding of who we are, in relationship with God, in the presence and power of the Spirit is quite distinct. It’s more than what “spirituality” and being spiritual mean in common usage today. +

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe is senior minister at Glenview, Toronto.



The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul *is seeking a lead minister*

We are a vibrant congregation with members from a range of backgrounds and cultural communities located in the dynamic downtown of Montreal. We emphasize Biblical preaching which relates the gospel of Christ to contemporary life. Our service is traditional and is supported by a ministry of music which is known throughout the city for the excellence of the choir and organ performance.

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RENEWAL

New Year's Meditation

Three pieces of scripture for the year ahead. By Fred Stewart

AS A MINISTER, I often ponder the truths that my congregations need to hear. One of the most helpful ideas has been to reflect on what I need to hear. Although we all struggle with our own unique combination of challenges and temptations, there are issues we all have in common.

As we enter another year I'd like to focus on some scriptures that I suspect can speak to most of us. I found these passages at openbible.info and am listing the three scriptures voted to be the most helpful for this topic.

In the same way, let your light shine

before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.—Matthew 5:16

This verse challenges me to focus on the purpose of what we do. We are to be light as commanded by our Saviour. It answers the how question. Our love must be visible and remarkable and our deeds must be pointing to the Lord. So instead of our fame and glory being sought, it will be all to *his* glory. It answers the why question as well. We exist for others; not only as the objects of our love in the good we do, but also as the witnesses to our love so that they can be drawn to our Triune God. ➤

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RENEWAL, continued

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new. —2 Corinthians 5:17

How can I move into a new year and not be challenged to leave some of me behind? When my attitudes, fears, habits and actions are much more representative of the old me, the Christ-less me, I need to remember and live out my new reality: I am a new creation in Christ. We are called to be more like Jesus. Only he can do it and only we can resist. I want to stop resisting.

And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching... —Hebrews 10:24-25

This verse speaks to me of challenge and encouragement. I need to be challenged. Otherwise I can become complacent. I need to be encouraged. Otherwise I become discouraged. As communities of Christ, we need this both individually and corporately.

A summary statement for my new year's resolution could be this:

With God's help I will focus on being the kind of light and love that honours my God, I will reflect Jesus in the person I am becoming and I will build up the body of Christ by challenging and encouraging my sisters and brothers in all their efforts. ☩

Rev. Fred Stewart is executive director of the Renewal Fellowship and minister at St. Andrew's, Bolsover, and Woodville Community churches.



SHARING WITNESS

Walking Together

A year of sharing stories. By Vivian Ketchum

THE HOUSE-MOTHER is doing her rounds; the beam of light from her flashlight announces her presence. I have to muffle my cries and pretend to sleep. I can never recall just going to sleep in my lower bunk. I always cry until I fall asleep. I am not the only one in the dorm who cries themselves to sleep. I can hear the whispered sobs of the other children around me. Homesickness. No one to offer comfort. Somewhere in the darkness spirits are being broken by the raw loneliness of the place.

Mornings are a rude awakening from

the comforting dreams of being back home. Dreams of being with mom and dad, my sisters and brothers. The harsh lights and the house-mother's voice brings me back to the dorm room. I get up and put my feet on the cold floor and head to the washroom to wash up along with the other girls.

Then a series of line-ups, beginning with the line by the door to head down for breakfast. Then a line-up for breakfast. You grab a tray and have the food placed on your tray. Once I made the mistake of dipping my bread into >

SHARING WITNESS, continued



my milk and sucking on it—something I used to do at home with my tea and bannock. I was startled to have the bread knocked out of my hand by the house-mother. “Only babies do that,” she told me in a harsh voice.

I don’t recall ever being spoken to so cruelly before and I start to cry. My two sisters see me, but they have to remain seated in their area. Later on they tell me it was difficult for them to watch me being treated like that. I was the youngest of my brothers and sisters. The baby of the family. Coddled and cared for. Being in the residential school is a completely opposite environment.

Everything is so different. The food is not familiar and upsets my stomach. Sleeping alone in a bunk bed is new to me. I always slept with my sisters. Even the blankets and the sheets itch. They don’t smell like my mom’s blankets. My mom’s blankets smelled like sunshine and outdoors. At night I can hear a train whistle off in the distance. I imagine myself on that train. Heading back home. Back to my mom and dad. Away from this ugly place.

People tell me there must have been

something good in residential school. It couldn’t have been all that bad. So I sift through and search for something that brings back any happy memories. There

At night I can hear a train in the distance. I imagine myself on that train. Heading back home. Away from this ugly place

was one of my older sister, Barbie. She got to take me downtown on the bus on the weekend. The warmth of her hand in mine as we got on the bus. Both of us laughing at the silly stories she made up. Looking back to see the ugly red building of the residential school getting smaller and smaller in the back window. Now as an adult I use that one memory to help me walk through my many scary memories of residential school.

There are too many bad memories of being in residential school and not enough happy memories to outweigh the horrors of attending the school. I recall two specific events that changed me. One was where the house-mother hit my hand with my shoe. She broke my finger. All because I didn’t attend a dentist visit. My finger was never set. It was my first real experience with violence as a small child.

In the other incident I was placed in a cardboard box and the other kids kicked it. I couldn’t get out and can’t recall when or how I got out of the box. All I can remember was the feeling of being trapped. Screaming and crying. Both experiences broke me.

I WILL BE TELLING my story this year in this monthly column. I want you to walk with me on this journey, go back to the beginning where it all started. It is my hope that on this walk together I can help you understand a little deeper the trauma I grew up with, along with thousands of children like me, and you can help me work through my post-traumatic stress. The scene I described above happened four decades ago, but in my dreams, in my days, it is happening right now.

I have spent a lifetime working through those early experiences. In this column I want you to join me. You can write to me through the *Record*, by mail, online, and on Facebook. Tell me your story, which is nothing at all like mine, while I tell you my story. And together, hopefully, we can give witness to all the children that never came home. +

Vivian Ketchum is Anishinabe of Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation, outside of Kenora, Ont. She lives in Winnipeg.

Life

Thoughts and inspiration for your daily life



FAMILY

A Fragile Bereavement

The invisible and silent loss of miscarriage. *By Joyce Engel*

FOR SARAH, the picture of the fetus on her ultrasound confirmed that it “was my baby,” a reality. And when Sarah lost her first baby in the 16th week of her pregnancy, it was the picture of the ultrasound that she kept. Being told she was “only four months along” made it no easier to lose. He had a “spirit, an identity.”

We see the movements of a tiny, barely recognizable fetus on ultrasound and we are awed by God’s creation. We can see life beginning and we acknowledge that life as a gift from God; however, we still debate when personhood actually >

FAMILY, continued

begins. Thus, when an early pregnancy ends unexpectedly, our uncertainty is exposed and awkward.

For women and families who struggle with a decision to end pregnancy, we offer compassion. As a faith community, we recognize that this is not an easy choice and many of us make space for the decision as one of individual conscience. But for those who struggle with the pain of miscarriage (about one in five pregnancies ends this way), there is little acknowledgement of the loss; suffering is often untold and unrecognized. It is, as one writer suggests, a fragile bereavement. There is no past to mourn, perhaps no recognizable body to bury, and no rituals. Its pain is silent and invisible.

The Bible shares stories of great joy about pregnancy. In Luke 1, Elizabeth and Mary rejoice together and Elizabeth's unborn child leaps for joy. Sharing pregnancy news is an important part of being with child; we want others to know about the life that we, as

women, experience so intimately and that others cannot yet see. It is a special gift and responsibility that is both present and future.


For those who struggle with miscarriage (about one in five pregnancies ends this way), there is little acknowledgement of the loss; suffering is often untold and unrecognized

In my research with women who have experienced miscarriage, pregnancy meant planning, dreams and hopes. But in miscarriage, dreams for this baby are lost. What remains is only sparse evidence of the fetus, such

as an ultrasound picture, and feelings of guilt, self-blame and sadness that can continue for days, weeks, and sometimes even years. Sarah says she "probably cried every day for 30 days" following her miscarriage, and the baby who was lost is still present three years later. "I carry that baby with me through life's experiences," she said. "It was still mine."

For mothers, sharing news of the miscarriage is a difficult decision; especially to those who never knew about the pregnancy. It is like re-opening a wound to reveal the pregnancy and then to follow with news of miscarriage. Sharing the news of the miscarriage can come with fear of censure or judgment from others. Sarah told me it can also come with painful advice such as "maybe you drank too much coffee," or "you can always get pregnant again." Suffering is silent and invisible.

So how should we respond to those who suffer miscarriage? Because a relationship is lost that we cannot see or experience, we may find it difficult to share in that loss. Yet, as Christians, we already come with understanding. We have the capacity to accept, fully, the reality of life we cannot see and thus, to acknowledge its loss. A simple "I am sorry for your loss" carries great weight. We might also consider recognition of the loss during our prayers for others who grieve or in rituals of life remembered. Placing tiny candles among the big ones during remembrance services can help to say, what you have lost is unseen; your suffering is not. We understand.

Sarah, and the many, many women like her, will thank you. 

Joyce Engel is a member of St. Giles, St. Catharines, Ont., and an associate professor at Brock University.

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PROFILE

‘I Was Led to Do This’

One woman's calling. By Amy MacLachlan

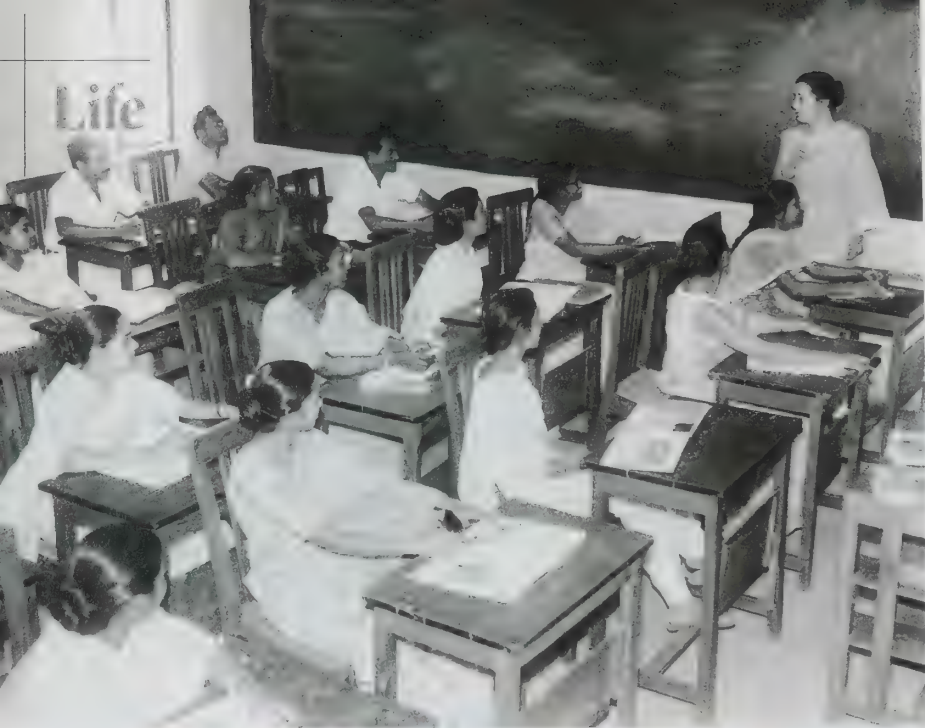
PAULINE BROWN'S STORY is of God calling an unlikely candidate to do God's work, and the willingness to answer that call. It gives me goosebumps.

.....
Brown tells me she likes to party. Not exactly the traditional idea of a missionary. But after three years in the navy tending wounded soldiers in WWII, she got the notion she wanted to go to India. She studied nursing, applied to the Women's Missionary Society and in

1951, at the age of 26, left behind everything she knew and landed in Mumbai (then called Bombay).

"When I got off the ship, I went down the gangplank and I stepped onto the pier in Bombay and I thought, and it sounds ridiculous, but I thought, 'I've arrived.' And that's how it has been.

"[My family] just didn't believe that I was going to go as a missionary. That was beyond everybody. It was beyond me too because I'm not that type. For us the stereotype of a >



PROFILE. continued

no preparation, no deaconess training school, nothing. I got a long list of what I should bring, which included hammer and saw and nails, and all of these kinds of things.

"And to think, when I went—I was going for five years in '51—and they said, Five years? You won't stay there one year!"

"I said, I don't know. I just have to go."

Brown is 90 now and has been in India ever since, working for the Presbyterian Church in Canada through the WMS. She is the church's longest serving mission worker. She is humble but opinionated, kind and witty, doesn't mind laughing at herself, and shrugs off the accolades that continue to pile up: Order of Canada, honorary doctorate of divinity, one of the Presbyterian Church's Women of Faith awards.

She started out in Amkhut, in the heart of the Bhil Field. (Bhils are an indigenous group considered to be some of the lowest on the social ladder, often referred to as "no caste," or even sub-human. The PCC has had a missionary presence there since 1897, thanks to John Buchanan.) Brown stayed with other missionaries, women of the WMS, in a beautiful whitewashed home that still stands today.

"I didn't know what a missionary did. I had no idea. But because of the nurturing of my senior colleagues, and because of the nurturing and the support of the local leaders of the church—that means the Bhil leaders of the church—I learned."

Brown remembers being told not to walk too far in the evenings, for fear of tigers and leopards—something she saw quite a few of in the early days. She remembers waking early, having a short prayer service, then packing up a medical bag and heading out in the mobile health unit to various villages.

"We were usually under a tree or on



Clockwise from top: Pauline Brown teaching nursing students in Indore; speaking at the 2014 National Presbyterian Women's Gathering; students performing during the festivities for the opening of a new school in Jobat, where Brown lives, in 2006.

missionary was sort of very staid.

"The man who thought we should be married, he said, you will be back.

"And I said, well, maybe."

When she left her normal life in Ottawa as a young woman, it was to go to the Bhil Field in rural India, the jungle, the ultimate middle of nowhere; knowing relatively nothing of the country, or of being a missionary.

What she did know was medicine. "When I came for my interview [with

the WMS], they said, what are you thinking you would like to do?

"And I said, well, I don't know. I don't know. I'm a nurse.

"And they said, well we've been praying for three months for a nurse to work in the mobile medical units. They asked, would you be willing to do that?

"And I said I would do whatever you say I am supposed to do.

"That was April. I was designated in September, and sailed. There was

someone's veranda. And in one place they asked us to be in the temple. And I was a little nonplussed. I said, but we will sing hymns and we will read the Bible and we will pray and they said, that's all right.

"I remember once the officer that thought we should be married—he was in Korea—he wrote to me and said, you're doing all these things in the village, giving medicine and... He said, would you give [the medicine] to people even if they didn't want to become Christian?"

"And I had never thought of that. And I think that for the church, for mission, it may be like St. Francis, you just give for the love of giving, and because you can't do anything else. ... There's no selectivity. The church is there as a symbol of whom it represents and if it doesn't represent honestly than there is no mission.

"[It's] what you're giving of yourself, no?"

Brown retired in 2007. She remains in India though, in her same house in Jobat, amid the trees and flowers and rolling green hills of the landscape she continues to wake to each morning.

"Even though she's retired now, she still gives such wise counsel," said Wilma Welsh, Brown's longtime friend and a former PCC moderator, who has visited Brown many times in India. (Welsh was one of the first women ordained as an elder back in 1967.) "You see the ministers, you see the community health workers, you see the doctors come knock on her door because they need to talk with her. And she's a confidante to most of them."

"I know now that I was led to do this," said Brown. "Yeah, sure, there were tough times but it was all right, cause that's the way it is. And you take it and, yes Lord, thank you Lord." 🍀

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's managing editor. She visited Pauline Brown in India in 2006.



Potable Quotables from Pauline Brown

ON BEING HAPPY

"I am content. I don't like everything. I can rebel and the Lord knows I do. But fundamentally I'm content. And it's difficult to explain but it is God's grace, I'm sure.

"In one way it's a wonderful feeling of freedom because you can do the damndest things and I have, believe me I have. I've made some terrible mistakes but God says, yeah, you sure did but I still love you. "

ON HAVING REGRETS

"One can wonder what might have been. But there were never, ever regrets. No. I think I chose by God's grace.

"What I say to young people, I say to them, you can have anything you want in this world if you are willing to pay the price. Now the price may be hard work, may be money, it may be making compromises. And some of those things are worthwhile ... And some things that you want may not be worth the price you are going to have to pay. So be sure.

"So I feel, yes, I could have had other things I want. But the price would have been too high. And so I have what I need and ultimately that is the best, for me."

ON WHAT SHE MISSES ABOUT CANADA

"I missed the concerts. When I come back I like to go to the opera.

"I don't think I can ever say I was homesick. I don't know really what that means. ... And family is very important to me...and maybe if God had not given me Indian family, I may not have been able to stay. And so I have brothers and sisters in India." 🍀



VIEWPOINT

Joyful and Heartbreaking

The role of female chaplains is integral to the Armed Forces.

By Bonnie Mason

IT IS EARLY EVENING. Canadian military members stand on the tarmac of Kandahar Air Field to give one more solemn salute to their fallen comrades, Master Corporal Pat Audet and Corporal Martin Joannette. Military pall bearers carry their caskets to the transport plane bound for home.

The pressing heat of July has lifted for the day, and as a slight wind tugs on the chaplain scarf of Padre Major Martine Belanger, her words of comfort and understanding come through clearly: "It's painful to realize

how precious and fragile human life is. We are dismayed; we cry for our loss. With courage, we say goodbye."

This was the third time in four days that Canadian troops had gathered to say goodbye to friends in arms. This piece of tarmac in Kandahar is holy ground, as chaplains from Canada and allied countries have said many prayers, and comforted many more soldiers who have stood at attention in sacred respect as the solo bagpipe lamented the final farewell of their deceased companions.

Padre Belanger is one of many female chaplains who had served in Afghanistan during the 13-year war that formally ended in 2014.

Women have been involved in Canada's military service and have been contributing to Canada's rich military history and heritage for more than 100 years; serving first as civilian nurses and then in 1906 they were admitted to the Regular Force.

It wasn't until July 1981 that the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service enrolled the first female chaplain, Georgina Kling. Padre Kling was a United Church minister and served for 25-plus years before retiring as a captain.

The RCCS has modeled for other countries the integration of women in key leadership roles within the chaplain service. It is the only chaplaincy, other than Australia, that has Roman Catholic women serving as chaplains. With the exception of consecrating the Eucharist elements and hearing confession, the Catholic chaplains fully officiate over the other five sacraments of the Catholic Church. In 2008, the chaplaincy enrolled a female Jewish chaplain who served in the reserve force before taking her retirement.

Female chaplains serve in all capacities of the CAF, deploying with the army, air force and navy on exercises and operations to such places as Bosnia, Afghanistan, Italy and the Persian Gulf.

Women have a profound and sometimes unique role to play in the military setting. In Afghanistan I was called upon by our American chaplain colleagues to help them with some very sensitive and delicate issues that called for female support when they

themselves did not have a female chaplain on the ground.

The role of a chaplain can be heartbreaking; you set off on a convoy in Afghanistan with young men

not something to be taken lightly for it is truly a sacred trust.

Chaplains, both male and female, have a very powerful leadership role to play in the CAF; the

One of my fondest memories was when I was deployed at sea to the Persian Gulf and I had the pleasure, as the chaplain, of telling one of the sailors that his wife had given birth to their first child, a healthy baby boy

and women who are excited and proud to be serving their country only to have them return, following an assault, having aged so many years in just a couple of hours or days.

There are also many joyful moments in this ministry. One of my fondest memories was when I was deployed at sea to the Persian Gulf and I had the pleasure, as the chaplain, of telling one of the sailors that his wife had given birth to their first child, a healthy baby boy.

As chaplains, we are often one of the first people our men and women in uniform will contact about an issue which could range from financial or relationship concerns to fears or apprehensions about their careers. We counsel on health issues such as addictions, depression and anxiety and link them with the proper health care facility so that they are able to get the help they need.

It is an honour and a privilege to be invited into the most precious spaces of people's lives. They trust you with their thoughts, their fears, their hopes and their dreams. It is

military chaplaincy has spearheaded some very important initiatives and has implemented very essential policies which have ensured that all CAF personnel, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, or religious affiliation, will be treated with dignity and respect.

The military chaplaincy is supported and guided by the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy—the body through which the faith communities of Canada exercise their support to the CAF. This is done through the provision of chaplains to the CAF, while representing the work of the Chaplain Branch to those faith communities. Members of the committee represent the faith groups of serving chaplains. Currently, the chair of the ICCMC is Rev. Dr. Jean Morris, minister at Grace Presbyterian, Calgary, and the first female to serve as the chair.

Her leadership includes meeting with the most senior military officers and the Minister of National Defense to ensure that our military personnel are receiving the best spiritual >

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VIEWPOINT, continued

support possible. She provides advice to the Chaplain General and the Ministry of National Defence.

I have been serving as a chaplain in the CAF since August 2001. I have been deployed with our navy and army and have had the opportunity of being posted two years outside of Canada with the North American Aerospace Defense Command in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

At my present rank of Commander, I am responsible for providing leadership to more junior chaplains, making sure they get the courses and experiences they need to continue to develop in their roles, and I ensure they are providing the best religious and spiritual support to our military personnel. It is an awesome calling, and I have the opportunity to work with some amazing chaplains.

This is a very important time for the CAF and for the military chaplaincy. Our leadership will be called upon more than ever in educating and influencing change, not only within the CAF, but as a model for the civilian institutes, such as in universities and in the corporate world.

As a woman, this is an excellent and exciting time to join the CAF. The military is on the cusp of yet another evolutionary process where women and female leaders will be engaged more than ever to participate in key conversations, be promoted into key positions of command, and participate in the movement of a healthier, more holistic military. +

Padre Bonnie Mason is serving as the senior chaplain in the 2nd Division of Canada located in Montréal, Que. To learn more visit: forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-support-services/chaplaincy.page.

Focus

Stories of mission, ministry and community

SPECIAL REPORT

The Gender Imbalance

Female ministers are outnumbered and underemployed.

By Connie Wardle

THIS YEAR will mark the 50th anniversary of women's ordination in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. So after half a century, what does the gender balance look like among our church's ministers?

The denomination doesn't have a statistical department, but it does maintain a database with some very basic information about the church's ministers, including their genders. Armed with an excel spreadsheet and the self-reported data available to us in the annual Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly, we set out to answer that question as best we could.

Here's what we found:

THE GENDER IMBALANCE, continued



Ministers of Word and Sacraments

There are 1,352 ministers of word and sacraments in the PCC.

Three hundred and twenty nine of them are women; less than a quarter (24 per cent) of all the ministers.

Ministers of Word and Sacraments Not Including Retirees

Women were not granted the right to be ordained until 1966. The first woman to be ordained within the PCC was in 1968.

There are 486 retired ministers. Of those, 82 per cent are men.

If we were to remove the 486 retirees from the total, the total percentage of women ministers rises only four points to 28 per cent.

The gender disparity isn't caused by a big pool of mostly male retirees skewing the stats.

As a later statistic shows, there remains a disparity of female graduates for the ministry.



Disparity of Inactive Ministers

Of the 329 women ministers of word and sacraments, a quarter are listed as “inactive,” which means they are working in positions that are less than half-time, or they aren’t working in ministry positions at all.

By comparison, just 18 per cent of male ministers are listed as “inactive.”

Inactive ministers are placed on the appendix to the roll of presbyteries. This means they don’t have a vote at presbytery meetings.

With a quarter of women inactive, compared to less than a fifth of men, the involvement of women is diluted.

Without active and plentiful role models, and without an equitable balance of female faces, women who might want to go into the ministry might feel discouraged.

(Twenty-six per cent of female ministers, the red quadrant, are retired. There are only 160 female ministers active in ministry in the Presbyterian Church in Canada.)



Diaconal Ministers

In addition to ministers of word and sacraments, there’s another type of minister in the PCC. These ministers are almost all women and their form of ministry predates women’s ordination.

Diaconal ministers were called “deaconesses” until 1984 (the Order of Deaconesses was founded in 1908) and their forms of ministry ran the gamut from social justice to mission work to Christian education.

Diaconal ministers were treated as second-tier ministers for a long time. They weren’t entitled to a housing allowance like ministers of word and sacraments until 1990, and they weren’t granted a voice and vote in church courts until 1991.

Today there are 111 exclusively diaconal ministers; all but one of them are women and only 16 of them (14 per cent) are listed as “active” in the church’s database. Fifty-seven per cent are listed as “inactive.” That suggests most of these women are underemployed or not working in ministry at all. ➤



THE GENDER IMBALANCE, continued

Women are in Lower Paying Ministries

We've heard people suggest that female ministers make less money than male ministers, so we took a look at the financial statistics printed in the 2015 Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly. Again, all the figures in the commonly called "Blue Book" are self reported, and the individual stipends are not listed. There is, however, a line in the statistical reports intended for the stipend of each church's principal minister.

We decided to look at all the churches that reported the stipend of the principal minister as \$60,000 or more in 2014.

- Three were led by husband and wife ministry teams
- 36 were led by male ministers (a few with female associate ministers)
- Only one was led by a female minister

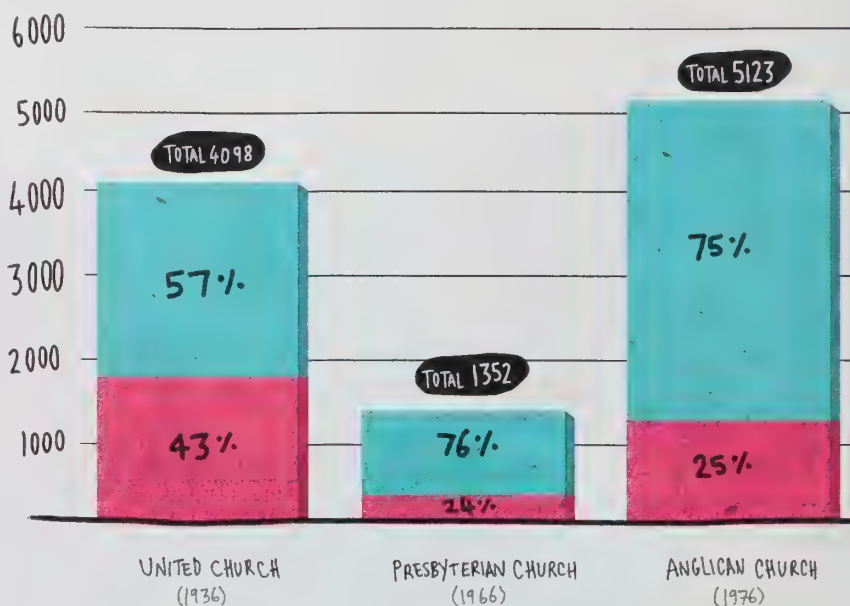
This suggests women are underrepresented in the highest paying ministry positions.



In Comparison to Other Denominations

To see how the Presbyterian Church stacks up against other comparable denominations in Canada, we asked for statistics from the Anglican Church and the United Church.

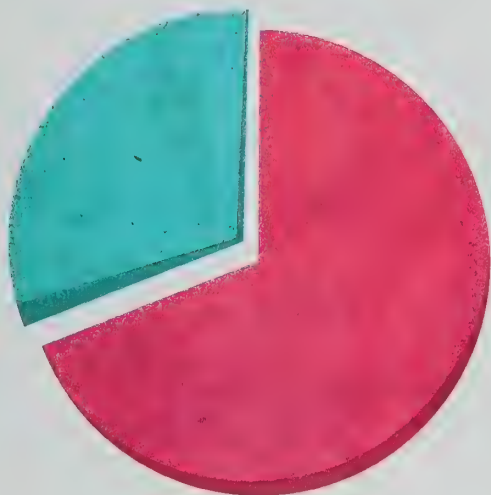
Although the Presbyterian Church has fewer ministers overall, the statistical proportion of female ministers is similar to the Anglican Church, which allowed women to become priests 10 years after the PCC allowed women to become ministers and elders. In fact, if we remove the 2,267 retired Anglican priests from the total, the percentage of women priests rises to 39 per cent—a much better gender balance than the PCC.



The United Church is closest to achieving gender balance. In fact, in the UCC, women outnumber men

among ministers under 65. (Fifty-six per cent of working age United Church ministers are women.)

Ministry Graduates (2010-2014)



Staff at the United Church noted that so far this decade there have been far more women (69 per cent) than men being ordained in their denomination.



Counting all the graduates from our three Presbyterian colleges, we've trained fewer women (38 per cent) than men over the same period.

Gender Balance for Ruling Elders

Feeling discouraged by these numbers? Here's some hope. In 2001, the Presbytery of Montreal submitted a memorial to the General Assembly noting that some sessions still prevented women from serving as elders. (The 1966 assembly allowed women to be ordained as ruling elders as well as teaching elders or ministers). As part of their response, the clerks of assembly began to gather data on the gender balance of sessions. In 2003, when they released the first set of results, it revealed that 40 per cent of elders were women.

Today there are still discrepancies, and some presbyteries and sessions are better balanced than others. But overall, the gender balance is almost even. ☛





Shouting for MORE

When it comes to women in ministry, we've come a long way, but is it far enough?

By Amy MacLachlan

Illustration by Barry Fairis

IN DECEMBER I had the most wonderful fortune of attending a conference in New Orleans. Hosted by the Ecumenical Stewardship Centre, the event focused on wealth and poverty in North America. We met in the massive St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church, smack dab in the middle of the city's Garden District where the wealthiest of the wealthy live in perfectly picturesque southern homes. The minister at St. Charles is Elizabeth Lott, the first female to head a Baptist congregation in the state of Louisiana. On the church website, the tagline reads: "Historic Church. New Era." And they're right. While Lott hasn't been there long, she is already making her mark, working diligently to welcome those who may otherwise be >

excluded, and as the church's mission states: "asking questions, loving neighbours, seeking justice, and welcoming all."

It is a church that has "long been known for its progressive stances, innovative ideas, and creative leadership," and has always had a penchant for supporting women in ministry, starting in 1971 when "Saint Charles became the first Baptist church in Louisiana to ordain women as deacons," and in 1980 "the first Baptist church in Louisiana to ordain a woman to the Gospel ministry."

It was a fitting location then as we considered interrupting perpetual cycles of discrimination and injustice. It was also fitting as I thought about producing the magazine you are now holding.

I've been wanting to do this issue on women in ministry for ages now. We've thought and chatted about it; we've wondered how to do it, what would be helpful, what wouldn't. We spoke with others. We pored over facts and figures. Did we get it right? I don't know. But I do know it had to be done.

"The church has been slow to do any kind of analysis on this," said Nancy Cox, whom I spoke with when I wanted her to be our guest editorialist this month, "partly because we don't like to think that a worldly factor like gender makes a difference, but I'm quite sure that it does."

In speaking with women across the church, one thing became clear: they definitely have a story to tell. And, in most cases, they want to tell it (though sometimes anonymously).

And perhaps that's it. I don't have any idealistic expectations that thanks to the *Record*, the problems of the Presbyterian Church will magically be solved; that women will automatically be granted full equality—in every way, both subtle and not—with men in this church

(and outside of it). But if I've learned one thing during my 12 years with this magazine, it's that we're here to give people a voice. Whether that's women in the Congo who are victims of rape and violence, wanting people to know of their struggles; or Canada's First Nations peoples telling their stories of abuse in our country's residential schools; and yes, of women within


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this church who still experience discrimination in its various forms.

And so we're here to ask the questions. (Why are only a quarter of our ministers female? Why are they often in small congregations, and paid less than their male counterparts? Why aren't we talking about this more?)

We don't propose to have all the answers. Far from it. But if we don't ask questions and share the voices that may otherwise be ignored, nothing can or will change. It is when we tell others our story that something different can happen.

So please, on this 50th anniversary of ordaining women in our church, read these pages with an open mind and an open heart. Learn the stories. Consider your own. And think about how you can help create a happier ending.

One other note: The stories that follow have been heavily edited for space. Please visit our website to read them in their entirety. 

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's managing editor.

'There is ALWAYS room at the top'

Stories of Women in Ministry

Designated Women

IN 2011 I PUBLISHED *From the Bottom Up: a Story of Collegial Leadership*, about diaconal ministers.

The majority of diaconal ministers are now ordained but some still prefer diaconal status. (I was designated in 1986 and ordained in 1996.) However, even after ordination, most of us still think of ourselves as diaconal because our emphasis is on giving collegial leadership.

There were hundreds of PCC “designated” women who worked side by side with ordained males in their communities (and sometimes even led congregations on their own) since 1908. Often deaconesses were sent into a new community to develop connections, perhaps a Sunday school or other outreach, often in muddy streets and other difficult conditions. Once they had established the beginnings of a church, then an ordained male would be sent in to carry on the work.

They were glad to call on them

when needed but they were also the first whose jobs were cut when finances became tight. —Rev. Joyce Davis

Slow Change

THIS YEAR, I celebrate my 40th anniversary of ordination and much has changed—the ratio of men to women clergy in our denomination has changed entirely. We women are no longer “a very few.” Right now, I’m interim moderator and find that for the search committee the gender of the applicants to be their minister hasn’t made any difference to them at all.

A number of years ago, women were mostly associates, assistants, or in rural/remote parishes. I don’t know if this has changed, since my focus and heart’s calling have always been with rural and smaller congregations—that’s where I’ve wanted to be. Consequently, I suspect that my stipend has been a bit lower than some colleagues and thus my pension. But rural and smaller were a conscious and happy

choice for me. I don’t know if women who wish to serve in larger centres find they are open to them or not.

The attention I received from every media source when I became the first woman General Assembly moderator is indicative that in the early ‘90s, we had miles to go as a denomination in the area of equality. It’s remarkable that we’ve quit describing women moderators as the first or the second, etc. —Rev. Dr. Linda Bell

A Failure to Mentor

A SENIOR COLLEAGUE drew me aside once after a presbytery meeting and offered this sage advice: “If [name of male minister] ever touches you, you just tell him, ‘Don’t touch!’” I was aghast. How did he know that this person had approached me in such a way? Was there a history of similar behaviour? The man with the soothing voice was a highly-respected, senior clergy person who advocated mandatory boundaries ➤



workshops for all members of presbytery. Clearly, unbeknownst to him, his advice indicated that his concern first and foremost is to protect the old boys even if it means belittling the claim of anyone who shakes their sanctuary. I did not reply that I believe these advances had to do with a desire for power and privilege, not sex. It was tough enough to hold my head up high.

A senior leader of the PCC has said many times that “most congregations prefer to have a young man with his young family as their minister.” Why has the PCC failed to mentor women to take top administrative positions in national offices and theological colleges? Why is it that few ministers will actively counter and educate congregants and elders on this issue of the ordination of women and the role of women in senior administrative and teaching positions in our church? Don’t ask, don’t tell! —*Anonymous*

Unequal Layperson

AS A LAYPERSON and a woman within the Presbyterian Church I have at times felt very supported and encouraged and at other times have hit the glass ceiling and found it to be stained glass. I can recall talking with a clergy friend and she told me as a layperson I would never be considered an equal as I was born 10 years too early.

If I had not had the privilege of working alongside people like Dr. Hugh Davidson, Dr. Harry Waite, and Dr. Ted Sivers, I would have not had the visibility that I had. I remember Ted Sivers giving me a mug that said, “There is always room at the top.” I still have it. It has on it a picture of a woman climbing a ladder. —*Wilma Welsh*

Leaning In

IN HER BOOK, *Lean In*, Sheryl Sandberg says women will only apply to a job if they have 100 per cent of the skills and feel very confident in their ability to do the job. Men will apply for a job even if they don’t know if they have the skills and even if they haven’t any experience in a certain area. This seems to me to be a real wake-up call for interim moderators and congregations—that they may have to seek out and encourage female applicants, particularly if it is a congregation that has typically had male clergy leadership. Congregations may be missing out on wonderful applicants and/or are passing by applicants who know they are ready for a new challenge. This also seems to be an encouragement for women to take some risks and apply to where they feel the Spirit may be tugging them, not just where they feel they have 100 per cent of the skills already. —*Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee*

Fighting for Equality

PEOPLE THINK that women’s equality/inequality issues are things of the past. Unless they experience it for themselves they will not see the inequality that is still there in many churches. For many people, they don’t come to church to fight gender issues; the majority of people come to church seeking comfort and a place to belong. If they fit in they will be homogeneous with the rest of their church and likely will not have big issues. It would be easier for them to see racial issues in their church partly because it is still very much an issue today in society.

Church is a very personal thing; if any of these issues, whether gender, racial, sexual orientation, etc., are encountered through some members within the church, then the people in the pews would become aware of it, but if church remains homogeneous then they wouldn't know any difference.

I think there is always the potential for inequality to be in our churches because women and men are different and the power struggle will always be there. From that end, we still need women's organizations in our church so that through such organizations women can be empowered, their awareness raised, and can keep fighting for equality. —*Anonymous*

Iffy Opportunities

WHEN I CAME to Canada and became part of the PCC, it was with the realization that women in ministry were more of a minority than in the U.S. I sensed this in presbytery, especially in observing those who spoke and whose opinions carried more weight. My usual response is to network, so I developed an ecumenical group of women clergy for support and friendship. I found this to be an important outlet, especially as a newcomer.

My aspirations have never been for a big steeple church. I am passionate about pastoral care and ecumenism. I found my niche in campus ministry. It is a part-time position and much of my time is dedicated to grant writing and fundraising. This seems to be the Achilles heel for so many women. Ministry opportunities are more precarious. —*Rev. Dr. Carol Wood*

'I'm What They Got'

MY SITUATION as a professor is so particular, I think it's outside this scope of

interest. So much of advancement within the academic world is on the basis of teaching ability and publishing both for the academy and the church, that some of the effects of old style 'sexism' are somewhat muted (at least now—earlier on, there was more of an issue).

In my many forays into guest preaching and adult education in local churches all over the country, I think there were times when being a woman caught a few people off guard, but generally I was well accepted and respected for what I could do rather than for representing a certain gender.

One humorous incident happened early in my time at Knox College, around 1997. I was a guest preacher at a church north of Toronto and when I found my way through an open door early that Sunday morning, I was greeted by an elder. When I introduced myself as the preacher for the day and the professor of Old Testament from Knox, he blurted out "You don't look like an Old Testament professor!" Not sure what they were expecting, but I'm what they got! —*Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls*

Never Felt Inequality

GIVEN THAT I am a second-career minister, my story is bound to be very different from a young woman who has gone from high school to university to seminary to a call. Let me say, first of all, that I have never felt inequality because of my gender. While I recognize that it does exist from speaking to colleagues, personally speaking, I have found that being a woman has made no difference that I know of. However, it is possible that some of the places where I put my profile when I was seeking a call just eliminated me because I was a woman. I have no way of

knowing that. I do know that I was told that, before I was called at my current position, there was a lot of discussion about the wisdom of calling a woman. (I am the first woman in this charge.) —*Anonymous*

Men Rule the Roost

ALTHOUGH WOMEN have made many advances in and out of the church in the last few decades, we are still second-class citizens in the courts of the church. Men rule the roost! Especially male ministers. Is this because women want it that way (because there are lots of women ministers and women elders who are members) or is it because when they do speak out they are either ignored or denigrated? Thus women are not appointed to positions of power, generally, and if they are it is because the power is on the surface only, not real, i.e. moderator of GA.

We have become a church of legalistic rule-makers rather than a community of caring and loving friends. There are exceptions, thank goodness, but our courts most often do not reflect the love of God through Jesus Christ, despite our fine words. —*Betty Siverns*

Equally Called

I HAD FORGOTTEN the whispered sexist comments, the nasty letters, and the derogatory speeches. I had almost forgotten the terrible interview for licensing where I was asked why the church was investing its time and money in women, why did I hate men, what would I do if I ever got pregnant, and would I handle the Communion elements if I was menstruating?

Perhaps we have been able to change the face of the church. If it >

is true that we are becoming more inclusive, less hierarchical, and encouraging of the gifts of all of God's people for ministry then we are privileged to have seen monumental change in the imaging of the church. Or perhaps it has been more of a reclaiming of what we know is already true, that "God created humankind in God's image" and that "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all are one in Christ Jesus." Equally saved, equally valued, and equally called. —*Rev. Linda Ashfield*

Sexualized, 'Othered'

AFTER SPEAKING AT A PCC event, I left the stage and walked to the back of the room. A male colleague came up and instead of saying that he appreciated what I had said, he said "Hey there," (looking me up and down), "I have never seen a sexier minister. Looking good." So what was I supposed to do with that! I was totally dumbfounded. However, there is a catch-22: If I say something it is easy to be cast off as "not having a sense of humour" or "being too sensitive." So instead of saying something, I just smiled grimly and walked away.

Besides often being sexualized and "othered" as a woman in leadership in the church I have often experienced (and I see this with women younger than me now) being treated like the daughter/granddaughter of other members of presbytery. I have found the floor of presbytery to be one of the most challenging places to find my voice, and many other women, elders and ministers, struggle with this as well. I am not completely clear on why this is but part of it is finding oneself having been

'(grand)childified,' and all the baggage that can come with that. —*Anonymous*

Better Today, But ...

THERE ARE STILL situations in which congregation members are surprised when they 'like' a woman minister. Despite having a woman moderator of the assembly this year, there haven't been very many. Year after year, I would stand up in my presbytery to remind the assembled presbyters that they had agreed back in 1990 to nominate both a man and a woman for moderator every year. Often I was told there simply wasn't a woman available.

Personally, apart from the initial expression of bias in my first, and only, congregation, I really haven't experienced any discrimination in ministry and have greatly enjoyed the relationships that I have had with my male and female colleagues. It saddens me that congregation members don't seem to have the same attitude toward women ministers as their clergy counterparts. —*Rev. Dr. Karen Bach*

A Relational God

I STARTED attending the Presbyterian Church when I was four days old. When I was seven [1960] I gave my life and future over to God at a daily vacation Bible school held in the Presbyterian church in Sunny Corners, N.B. When I was 17 I affirmed my baptism and the decision I had made when I was seven and joined the PCC by profession of faith. The church has always been an important part of my life and it has been crucial to the formation of who I have grown up to be.

I think differently, do theology differently, experience God in a relational way, challenge the systems I operate within, and passionately advocate for change where change is needed. Is that because I am woman? Or is that because I am a follower of Jesus? —*Rev. Margaret Mullin*

Need to Prove Myself

AS I REFLECT on women in the ministry a few thoughts come to mind. I think a lot of my insecurity throughout my career was grounded in a deep need to prove myself. I spent a lot of energy in my early years of ministry working myself to the bone so that I could be seen as an equal to my male counterparts. I felt insecure in my role and even a bit defensive. I took everything to heart and wouldn't let myself fail even once. Some of this was because of my negative experiences but I think some of it was self-imposed torture. To some extent I still feel that I have to continually improve myself to be seen as an equal but as I mature and as the church changes, those feelings are resolving. —*Rev. Heather Vais*

'That's My Minister'

AT ONE OCCASSION, I visited a man in the hospital. He was the janitor at a gas station/restaurant out on the highway. It was around a time when people were choosing to go somewhere else rather than have a woman be the minister for whatever their need was. I visited with him, we prayed, and I left. The elevator was right outside his room. And I heard him say to his roommate, "That's my minister." I can still hear the pride in his voice and I still sense the encouragement it gives to me. A real gift from God during

a rough time—and still today.

I think women have come a great distance during my time as a minister (35-plus years). They are taking much more active roles in the church courts. They are providing congregations and presbyteries with good, solid leadership both as clergy and as elders. But there is still a bit of a ways to go. The previous minister here was also female. Yet we have only two female elders out of 12; and when we held an election a few years back, there were no women elected. —*Rev. Helen Smith*

Took a While

ON MAY 31, 1977, I was the first woman to be ordained within the bounds of the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces, and the first from the Presbytery of Halifax-Lunenburg. While there were women ruling elders in both my first two charges, there were none on session when I arrived in Pictou. That has since changed.

Any discrimination or, more often, a patronizing attitude, came from only a few colleagues, usually older but not always. It was not necessarily from a theological objection to the ordination of women but from habits and patterns of traditional male-female relationships. The vast majority of my colleagues, though, throughout my ministry have treated me as an equal. —*Rev. E.M. Iona MacLean*

'A She?'

"A SHE!? Your minister's a woman? That's just not right, read 1 Timothy chapter 2." Said to my secretary when a woman called to order tickets for a church dinner.

"I guess it's okay for women to be ministers, but these days the masculinity of men is being threatened and they need to be affirmed as leaders too." Said by a woman.

"Are there, uh, many like you out there?" Said by a couple at a funeral.

The problem is that deep down, even though my heart tells me my ministry is blessed by God and my head tells me that scripture is contextual, all the little comments and the big objections chip away at the confidence I have in my call. Ministry is hard enough without doubting my ability because of my gender. —*Rev. Tobey Boyer*

Been Blessed

I'VE BEEN BLESSED to have had a very good experience as a woman in ministry over the years. When I was ordained at age 25, in the late 1990s, any issues of being accepted were more about being young than being a woman. Misconceptions about women ministers were found in the community, not in the congregations.

Occasionally, as I speak or lead as a guest in other congregations, there are comments about my appearance—how I must stay thin by being so busy with my children! I doubt that men would be offered this kind of feedback. Even if the comments are favourable, I'd prefer that people compliment me based on my gifts in ministry rather than on my appearance. —*Rev. Lara Scholey*

Still Work to Be Done

IN 1976, I started working as an area educational consultant. I was the only woman serving for miles and I experienced the delight of having

comments made repeatedly about my hairstyles, outfits and distracting presence. Added to the fun was the repeated applause that I would get for my reports when no one else received the same.

Today, while we have experienced so many capable women in leadership at all levels of the church, we would be foolish to state that complete equality has been achieved. You need only look at the Acts and Proceedings to discover that women serving larger congregations are not being paid comparable to men in similar charges. For example, I serve a larger congregation than my husband, but I am paid less. I am also aware of congregations within my presbytery that have still not had a woman minister. The Life and Mission Agency has not yet hired a woman to be its general secretary. The decades-old desire for inclusive language still seems difficult to achieve at the grassroots.

We have come a long way but our work is not done. —*Rev. Karen Horst*

Strong Opinions

DO I FEEL equally able to express my strong opinions? Well, based on 37 years' experience, women with strong opinions pay in a different way—in terms of respect, opportunity, reputation—than men do. It certainly has shaped my ministry. That kind of watchfulness over women who have strong opinions I think still exists. If you're Miss Congeniality, you're going to have less resistance than if you're a woman who speaks out. —*Rev. Dr. Nancy Cocks* +

These stories have been heavily edited for space. You can read them in their entirety on our website.

FROM THE MODERATOR

Questions of Justice and Truth

We cannot celebrate while many sisters suffer. By Karen Horst

How many of us sit and dream about what our children or grandchildren will see and achieve in their lifetime? My granddaughters will have opportunities that never even occurred to me in my childhood. They are quick to see themselves as teachers, astronauts, doctors or firefighters. They are able to express their opinions and ideas openly. They can jump in mud puddles, climb trees and slug the ball without second guessing themselves. I think Nellie McClung would smile at the progress women have made since 1929 when all women were declared “persons” in Canada and given the right to sit in the Senate. McClung was a spunky Canadian who was part of the Famous Five that fought for women’s rights and suffrage.

Back in the ‘80s, a woman in my congregation talked with her son about what he would like to do when he grew up. He indicated that he would like to be a minister, but then he said, “Can guys be ministers?” He had grown up with me as his minister and was unaware of the real statistics back then.

We can celebrate that women have come a long way, but we still have major work to do. Full equality and justice for women are still a long way off, especially when we glance at the world globally.

Here are only a few of the statistics you will find in the UN Women report for 2014-2015 (unwomen.org):

- One in three women will be a victim of physical and/or sexual vio-



Globally, women need assistance with income generation and economic empowerment. They need education, especially to understand their basic rights in the human family

lence in her lifetime usually committed by an intimate partner.

- At least 50 per cent of the world’s women are now paid wage and salary employment yet still earn 10-30 per cent less than men (based on a study of 83 countries).
- Even though women are on the front lines regarding the fallout from conflicts, only nine per cent of negotiators at peace tables were women.
- In 2014, over 75 per cent of those needing humanitarian assistance were women and children.

In Canada, according to a CBC report, we are falling behind in the developed world in women’s equality. Poverty rates are climbing for elderly single women and for single parent families headed by women. Pay gaps are still very real and we have no national strategy to halt violence against women.

We cannot celebrate while many sisters suffer hardship and oppression. Globally, women need assistance with income generation and economic empowerment. They need education, especially to understand their basic rights in the human family. They need to find ways to be a part of the decision making process so that their needs and the needs of their families are addressed.

Progress is being made and often the church is in the lead. I am proud of the work our denomination does through Justice Ministries, Presbyterian World Service & Development, International Ministries and more. The PCC has a clear commitment to raise the rights of all people and we do not see these issues as “women’s issues” but rather questions of justice and truth.

We are witnesses of Jesus Christ who states in Matthew 25 and Luke 4 that our mandate should be the same as his. We need to do our part to further Christ’s Kingdom so the world will be a fairer place for our great-granddaughters and their children. +

Rev. Karen Horst is minister at St. Andrew’s, Orillia, Ont.

People & Places

Find more online at presbyterianrecord.ca

Photographs can be uploaded at presbyterianrecord.ca.



KNOX, MEAFORD, ONT.

The congregation at Knox held a special appreciation Sunday for funeral directors and staff in the Grey County community. Staff from five local funeral homes attended. The service emphasized the hard work, support and care funeral directors offer people in difficult times. (And the cake proves they have a sense of humour, too!)



ST. MARK'S, TORONTO

As part of its 60th anniversary celebrations, St. Mark's donated \$4,000 to Doctors Without Borders. In September 2015, Nancy J. Graham, a nurse, and Harry MacNeil, a logistics officer (front), attended a service at St. Mark's and accepted the donation. They were welcomed by members of the anniversary committee (back row, from left) Debbie Aldcorn, Mary McCaffrey, Jennifer Ford, Marion Kezes and Rev. Harris Athanasiadis.



CANADIAN FORCES CHAPLAIN SCHOOL AND CENTRE, BASE BORDEN, ONT.

Capt. Frances Savill (centre) is minister at Calvin, North Bay, Ont., and a reservist chaplain with the Algonquin Regiment. She was honoured with the title of Top Candidate when she completed her Chaplain Basic Occupation Qualification Course. She might just be the only reservist chaplain to have won that prize. Here it's presented to her by Paul Acton, Commandant of the Canadian Forces Chaplain School, and Brigadier-General Guy Chapdelaine, Chaplain General, in recognition of her "superior ability and knowledge in pastoral care and servant leadership" and her ability to meet "every challenge with confidence and resolve."

THE OTHER SIX DAYS

Christian Crazyiness

Jesus pacifiers, online dating and outspoken pastors. *By Bradley Childs*

GIFTS

If you're like me, just after Christmas you always find yourself stumbling across the perfect gift for that Christian friend you weren't sure what to get, and now it just seems too late. Poor John or Jane Christian is stuck with boring old socks instead of something that really says, "Jesus loves you" like a Christmas present should. But wait, why do we feel bound to reserve gifts just for special occasions? What prevents us from being generous Christians the rest of the year (besides the credit card bill that shows up in January of course)? Well, I say splurge. Go ahead and show that special someone you care. Share the love of Christ all year round! And boy have I got the perfect shopping spot for you. They've got it all: light up Jesus keychains, What Would Jesus Do pacifiers for the little ones, magnetic What Would Jesus Wear dress-up doll kits, and the crème de la crème... a Jesus wallet that actually busts into song and luminous light when opened! Best present ever!

FIND IT @ stupid.com/religious-humor.

THE MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

Rev. Dr. Jeff Hood gets a lot of attention in some circles. Hood studied at Auburn, Emory, the University of Alabama, Creighton and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Most recently he received his Doctorate of Ministry in Queer Theology from Brite Divinity School. Previously he was ordained in a Baptist church and currently works for Hope for Peace and Justice in the state




Christian Mingle Inspector

of Texas. Hood is wildly political, is known to ambush or interrupt planned debate events, is the leader present for many marches, stages elaborate public displays to protest the execution of death row inmates and much more. Hood has recently come under fire for his statements about identifying Jesus as a Muslim in his connection to "the least of these" in society; spoken in favour of multiple-partner open Christian relationships; and is the author of several controversial books. One thing he is not is boring.

FIND IT @ revjeffhood.com.

VIDEO

We have all seen those sights that promote dating but are just for Christians. It turns out everyone wants to be on

eHarmony but it's not quite religious enough. Of course the problem with that is that eHarmony founder Neil Clark Warren is actually not just a clinical psychologist but also a Christian, theologian and seminary professor. But that's not enough for some of us and of course people should be concerned about being "equally yoked" and wanting the people they might someday marry to hold the same precious beliefs that they do. It only makes sense. But what if the people on Christian Mingle didn't make their site Christian enough, either? Then what? Here is the solution. **FIND IT @** YouTube. Search for "Christian Mingle Inspector." 

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.

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Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

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Rev. Angus Sutherland;
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ajmacbagpipe@yahoo.com.
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Rev. Bob Sim, 145 Hawkswood
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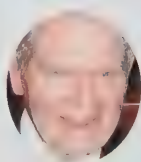
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Allum, Rev. Dr. Walter, died peacefully on November 2, 2015 surrounded by the love of his family in Kitchener,

Ont., in his 94th year.

Born and raised in Ottawa, Walter was a graduate of McMaster University and Knox College. Ordained by the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1951, he faithfully ministered for over 60 years to congregations in Brantford, Renfrew and Dundas, Ont. In later years he served the charges of Milverton/North Mornington and Arthur/Gordonville, Ont., and was stated supply to First Presbyterian Church Winnipeg, Man.

In retirement Walter enjoyed a special relationship with the people of Kitchener East Presbyterian Church. He was a true shepherd to his flock. To him, his congregations were truly "my dear people." Walter was a powerful and inspirational preacher, compassionate pastor and mentor to young men and women, especially those seeking to answer the call to ministry. In recognition of his service to his church and its people, Knox College conferred upon him the degree Doctor of Divinity in 1977.

Dearly loved father of Nancy, Mary, John, Peter and James and their families. From Dad we received unconditional love and through his example were privileged to learn our faith, the importance of family and a deep appreciation of education and learning along with a real zest for life. We will love and miss him always.

Survived by his brother Robert Allum and will be remembered with affection by his many nieces and nephews and their families.

Reunited now with those he loved most: his wives Jean (Barclay, 1973) and the Rev. Helen (Oliver, 2011); grandson Matthew Frost; his parents William and Rosa Allum; his brothers Bill, Frank, Fred and his sisters Muriel and Hilda.

A funeral service and celebration of Walter's life and work was held at Knox Presbyterian Church, Dundas, on Friday, November 6, 2015.



Stewart, Davida Ruth, faithful servant of Jesus Christ was welcomed to her heavenly home on Thursday, June 4, 2015. A

life-long Presbyterian, Davida MacEachern was born in 1934 in Charlottetown, P.E.I., and grew up at Zion where she was active in the Sunday school, Mission Band and PYPS. She became a Sunday school teacher and youth leader.

In 1956, Davida married Russell Stewart and shortly thereafter they moved to Nova Scotia and became members of St. Andrew's, Dartmouth, where Davida was active in the life and work of the congregation. In 1970 they returned to Prince Edward Island and became members of St. Mark's, Charlottetown, where Davida was ordained as an elder in 1972, a role she held for over 40 years. She also served as clerk of session for 18 years. She was active in every aspect of congregational life as an elder, Sunday school teacher, committee member and group leader.

Her deep and abiding Christian faith, her sense of duty and service and her desire to live out her faith in all areas of her life made her a role model and mentor to many, especially the youth of the congregation for whom she had a special fondness. Davida was the first layperson and woman to serve as moderator of the Presbytery of P.E.I. and the first lay moderator of the Atlantic synod. She served on various committees in all levels of church government.

In her professional career, Davida was a pioneer. She was the first woman to serve in a senior administrative position at Holland College and served in many capacities there, including director of office studies, director of development and external services and principal of the School of Business and Applied Arts.

A service of celebration for her life was held at St. Mark's in Charlottetown on Sunday, June 7. Davida will always be remembered as someone who was committed in her faith and who always carried herself with grace and dignity.

Left to cherish Davida's memory are her husband Russell, her son David, her son-in-law Dave Morrow, her church family at St. Mark's, her many friends, co-workers and colleagues across Canada. +

Obituaries

FOR THE JOURNEY

Reclaiming Darkness in My Spiritual Journey

Listening for God's still, small voice. By David Webber

"SO WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE WE don't see the northern lights like we used to?"

Linda was gazing out the large window from our darkened bedroom as she spoke.

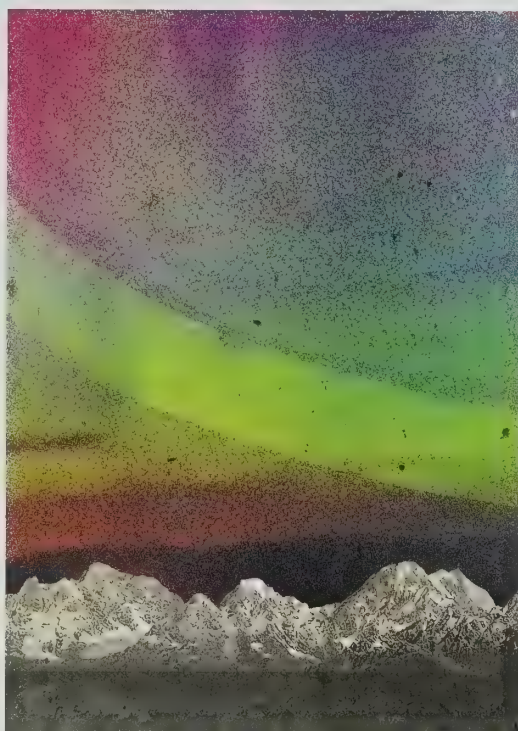
"I dunno; cause they're burnt out I guess," I muttered, my mind nearly mush in blissful sleep.

"Don't be goofy," Linda said. "I really do wonder why we don't see them like we used to. Our bedroom window looks northeast and it's the perfect viewing direction for northern lights. We used to see them all the time from the bedroom window, often dancing across the sky in shades of yellow, green, blue and pink, sometimes even blood red in colour. We don't see them at all anymore."

"It could be we are just going through a low period of sunspot activity," I yawned. I was now on the verge of being fully awake, my mind tweaked by my wife's inquiring mind. "I read somewhere that the aurora borealis are always most active during periods of high sunspot activity."

"And I heard on the radio we have been going through a period of high sunspot activity and the Northerns are supposed to be brilliant right now. But look, it's a perfectly clear night and no aurora."

I got up from bed and joined Linda at the window of our darkened bedroom. I then slipped on my moccasins and crept out onto the front deck to get a view from a different angle. There was not the slightest aura of the aurora, just a ridiculous frosted image of a steaming Stanfield-swathed senior citizen dashing through the January cold to try and



get back into the house before something suffered frostbite.

"Really dear, you ought to wear clothes when you go out into public, especially in January in the Cariboo," Linda chuckled. She was comfortably in bed now.

Shivering, I bounded back into bed, wrestled some covers from the resident Labrador and tried to stick my freezing feet onto the back of my wife to test her Norwegian resolve. The question of the disappearance of the mystical missing aurora was left unresolved.

As usual with most of our unresolved questions, this one got answered a few days later on the radio, which is the one media form of any kind allowed into our rural home. On a CBC radio story on the aurora borealis the expert being interviewed made

the point that we were indeed in a period of high aurora activity but that to see them one needed to be in almost total darkness. He also said that once our eyes had been infected by artificial light it took them almost 45 minutes to adjust to the darkness in order to see the soft glow of the northern lights in all their brilliance.

"Now we know," I said. "We haven't had a good show of the aurora borealis since Ross stuck up his ridiculously bright yard light after his dog died a few years ago. That darn light shines from atop his shed right into our bedroom window all night long. I ought to buy him another watchdog and shoot out the light."

But the answer to our question just raised another question for me. Is darkness a positive or a negative thing? ➤

Final Thoughts

FOR THE JOURNEY, continued

January is Epiphany and one of the emphases of this time of year in the Christian church is journeying from darkness into light. It's traditional in the church to parade out all the "darkness into light" texts one can find in scripture, and there is no shortage of them. Almost all of them use darkness or night for metaphors or symbols of evil, especially in the more dualistic Greek New Testament where typically we hear over and over again things like: "Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). Darkness is even directly referred to as the devil's domain in many places in the New Testament (Acts 26:18, Colossians 1:13, Ephesians 6:12).

Even in the more holistic Hebrew Bible, darkness usually carries negative and even evil connotations. In the creation story darkness is part of the precreation chaos; darkness must be separated from the light which is then deemed good. In Exodus darkness is one of the plagues in Egypt. In many Old Testament texts darkness is a symbol of misery and adversity—Job, Psalm 107, Isaiah 8, Ezekiel 30. In fact, I am hard pressed to think of any positive reference to darkness or night in the whole of the Bible. It seems to me and others too, like Episcopalian priest and author Barbara Brown Taylor (*Learning to Walk in the Dark*), that being influenced by the Bible from earliest times, "... Christians have used 'darkness' as a synonym for sin, ignorance, spiritual blindness, and death." Visit almost any church especially during Epiphany and you can still hear it used almost exclusively this way this very month. Ugh!

I get what all the biblical symbolism and metaphor is all about but this is not my personal experience of real

darkness. As a rural person all of my life, darkness has always been part of the blessed continuum of the day. As such it plays an important part in the cycle of a day and of life. Darkness, dawn, daylight, twilight, dusk, darkness. Each one of these carries with it physical and emotional and even spiritual blessings if I look for them. For me, darkness is not only where I can see the gentle glow of the aurora, it is a time of quiet, of listening. The day comes to a gradual encroaching visual and audio quiet. Even the birds cease their movement and chatter and a blessed quiet falls on me like a gentle snowfall. And in that gentle dark quiet I can hear what I don't normally hear, like the swoosh of an owl gliding across a nearby marsh, the twinkle of a tiny trickle creek into the lake, the cooing of a mourning dove somewhere far off, the buzz of a nighthawk swooping, hard at work on the mosquito population—and most of all, the still small voice of God hard at work on me. For me, darkness is like solitude and silence to the practice of the presence of God and listening for His voice.

Which brings me back to the scriptures. I said that I was hard pressed to find any positive use of the word or concept of darkness in the Bible—except that it is in the thick darkness that God is said to be, and out of the thick darkness God is said to speak to Moses. Huh? Darkness is the place of God's presence and of God's Glory and of God speaking? (Exodus 20:21; Deuteronomy 5:22) Now ain't that an epiphany! ☀

Rev. David Webber, now retired, was the founding missionary in the unique Cariboo ministry in Central B.C. His most recent of four books, When the Aspen Flowers, can be ordered through webberink@telus.net.



A table is set with a lovingly prepared meal.
A respected elder offers a blessing.
A family is reunited.

Hanna Bytion, (extreme left) member at St. Andrew's Humber Heights, Toronto, finally gets to embrace her sister Poline who arrived on a warm day in December. They had last seen each other four years earlier in Syria. For the past two years Poline and her four children have been living in Beirut, Lebanon.

St. Andrew's sponsored Poline Bytion and her children, along with St. Timothy's, Toronto, three local Anglican churches and one independent congregations.

From left: Hanna, Poline, George (family member), sister Jacklin Bytion, Poline's daughter Firrel, Marg Henderson, member at St. Andrew's, Rev. Soo Jin Chung, associate minister at St. Timothy's, family friend Latifa Banjamea giving grace, Rev. Paulette Brown, minister at St. Andrew's, Zahra Faiz and Carol, Poline's youngest daughter.

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Green Fields

Church planting is
the only way to grow
a denomination.



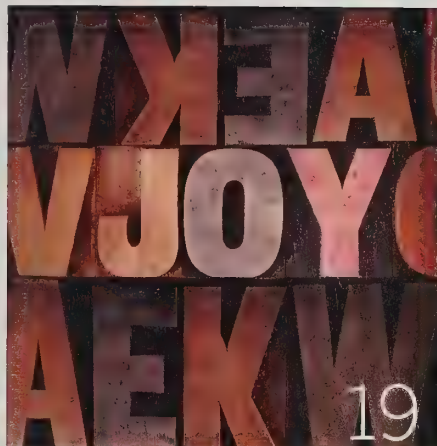
“Christians don’t simply learn or study or use scripture;
we assimilate it, take it into our lives in such a way that it gets
metabolized into acts of love, cups of cold water, missions into all the
world, healing and evangelism and justice in Jesus’s name, hands raised
in adoration of the Father, feet washed in company with the Son.”

—Eugene H. Peterson



PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

FEBRUARY 2016



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Most declining churches
will not turn around.
Planting new communities
of faith is the way to grow.



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FOR THE RECORD

Injecting Enthusiasm

Planting for growth. By David Harris

Blame

it on the Lucky Few—the Silent Generation—as they are called. Those who were born between 1925 and 1942 are the parents of most of the Baby Boomers—my generation. And the last of my generation did not get baptized at the same rate as those born in the 1940s and early '50s.

The result? Deceptively, all those Boomer children and their parents filled churches in the late 1950s and '60s to overflowing. The result was that mainline denominations in Canada thought they were on top of the world. Cinderblock churches were being thrown up across the country as fast as the mortar could dry.

Given the general state of euphoria, it's hardly surprising no one looked at the crucial numbers: how many baptisms were performed each year. In 1958, 11,380 adults and babies were baptized in the Presbyterian Church. In 1959? Only 10,726. The problem? The year 1959 had the highest number of births in Canadian history.

In other words, not only did the number of baptisms fall, they fell against a rising population. It was the beginning of the decline that we are all pondering today.

Membership in the PCC (post-Church Union) peaked at 202,566 in 1964. By 1975, it had fallen to about



the same level as 1945, just over 170,000. Today it stands between 90 and 95,000, a decline of almost 50 per cent in 40 years.

The PCC is not unique in this regard. Mainline Christianity across North America and Europe is going through a similar, sometimes worse, shift. It's been fodder for both church growth consultants and critics.

Critics don't like facts getting in the way of a story, so they too have ignored the demographics and blamed so-called liberal theology for the churches' decline. Among other things, this conveniently ignores the decline now being felt among Evangelicals.

It also plays into the numbers game (as opposed to whether people are actually growing in their relationship with God) and the fact that most of that growth is deeply linked to a backlash


among people who have been upset by the fast pace of change and the decline of institutions as a whole in society.

For church consultants it's been a boon. They have addressed a host of issues, helping churches engage people more effectively, from the development of small-group ministry to more relaxed worship styles to church planting.

Actually, all those cinderblock buildings were church plants. We just didn't call them that then.

But once they were built, we lost our enthusiasm for continuing to spread the church into communities. And instead of looking at those cheap little churches (let's face it, some of them are pretty uninspiring) as temporary homes, we fell in love with them and treated them with the same affection as the grand architectural edifices that dominate our cities and towns.

It's hard to argue with the growth success of church plants. In short, they work. And perhaps they are the way to go, at least for the foreseeable future. If nothing else, they inject enthusiasm into the local faith community.

Enthusiasm literally means "inspired by a god." In our case, an enthusiastic church community is one that is "God-breathed." As Andrew Faiz notes in our cover story, that's something we could use a little more of. 

David Harris is the Record's publisher and editor.

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

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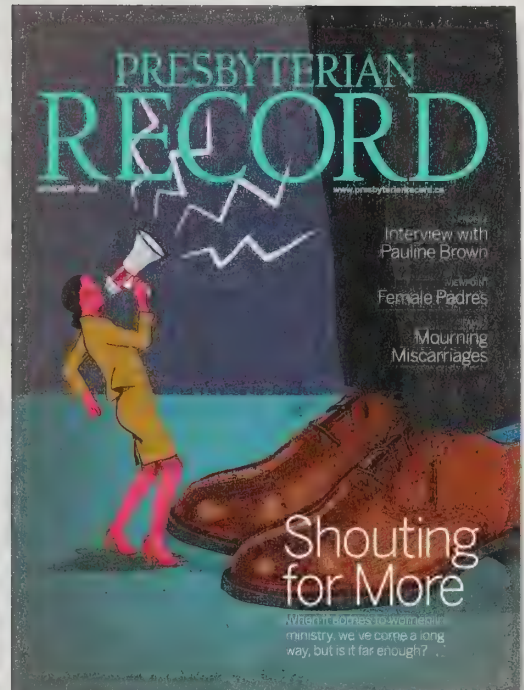
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Letters



WRITE TO US:

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Honesty Appreciated

Re Planning Goodbyes, October 2015

I want to express my appreciation for this article by Kristine and Patrick O'Brien. I have journeyed with many families in the attempt to accept death, to make sense out of death, and to have the courage to continue to embrace life.

One thing the authors did not mention that I have encountered is PowerPoint presentations. Such presentations give survivors the liberty to tell the story of the deceased in a vivid manner with no editing by

clergy or anyone else.

The shift to secular funerals does feature something that needs to be acknowledged—being honest with who a person is. I recall meeting with a family to prepare for a funeral. I gathered information about the deceased and used some of the material in my “Words of Comfort.” At the luncheon afterwards, a man said to me, “Preacher, I have no idea who in the h—l you were talking about. Mr. — was a miserable son of a —.”

When I shared this story with some ministers at a support group, >

First Thoughts

LETTERS, continued

I was reminded that the funeral pulpit is not the place to do therapy. Secular funerals represent a disconnect with the church and a sense of honesty which I appreciate at this time in our church's history. What follows is thankfully in God's hands.

RICHARD WORDEN, MEDICINE HAT, ALTA.

No Rose-Coloured Glasses

Re Very Adult Business,
December 2015

What's with the piece on Justin Trudeau by Jonathan Scott? For the most part it reads like a paid political announcement by the Federal Liberal Party. An astute writer from the *Globe and Mail* or the *Toronto Star* would have been much more informative and impartial than a love-in column in the *Presbyterian Record*.

Let the highfalutin fashion magazine, *Vogue* be the rose-tinted lens, as seen in their photo shoot of the prime minister and his wife, Sophie for the January 2016 issue!

L. ERIC WILSON, PERTH, ONT.

A Dinner Table Conversation

Re The Birth of the Continuing Church, March 2015

I read with interest the article on Church Union. I was a boy growing up in the early 1920s and I became well aware of the bitterness of the issue.

Our minister was the Rev. Robert Pogue, a genial Irishman who was well respected and liked. He was an excellent speaker and had a great appreciation for the English language. He used to embellish his prayers with quaint phrases such as "like cattle grazing on the thousand hills."

He was an ardent and persuasive supporter of Church Union and had a substantial following. But opposition was growing. My parents were against Union; my mother was convener of the recently formed Presbyterian Women.

In those days it was customary to invite a guest minister and soloist for anniversary Sundays. On a particular occasion, probably 1924, the minister and soloist were both

known to be very active supporters of Union. At the morning service the minister used the occasion to espouse the cause. The soloist sang two solos. She had a beautiful soprano voice. She was billeted at our home.

At Sunday dinner, after church, I looked across the table at her and, much to the chagrin of my parents, blurted out: "How can such a lovely person be in favour of Church Union?" I don't remember her answer, if any, or the reaction but I did notice her gentle smile.

DONALD HOWSON, PETERBOROUGH, ONT.

Remembering a Reverend

Re Honouring a Servant of God,
Letters, December 2015

Many, many years ago, I tried to be a good Sunday school teacher to some very energetic little six- and seven-year-old boys at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Maple, Ont. One of those boys was "Lawrie" Brice.

I have lived my adult years in Alberta and B.C., but have been aware of the faith and action of Rev. Dr.

Pastor Shep



Lawrence Brice through information I have found in the *Presbyterian Record*. I was also able to purchase one of his books. The letter in the December issue of the *Record* prompted me to write. I will acknowledge his faith journey with a donation to Reachout Ministries.

LYNN FRANCIS, ONLINE

A Woman of Honour

Re Sharing Witness, January

Vivian, it made me flinch to read this story of your life in the residential school. I cannot imagine being that little child, being wrenched from my family and subjected to such horror and terror. My heart actually hurts for you and all the children who were stolen from their families.

Your strength and power in the written word will make others understand, too.

DONNA COURTEAU, ONLINE

On this day of new beginnings is the perfect time for us to learn how the horrors of the past created the broken people

across the nation; to understand why the band-aid solution has not worked to repair the hurts felt so deeply in the child that the adult has such difficulty to overcome.

All of us who read the stories will be taken to another world, another time, affected by your words as you were affected by the harm and we too will never be the same.

KIMBERLY BENNETT, ONLINE

Viv, your article makes my heart ache. I feel that through your stories you can help to forge that bridge so necessary to enable reconciliation. Now, as in past times I feel so honoured to call you my friend. You are a woman of honour and mercy and justice.

MARION WARREN, ONLINE

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POP CHRISTIANITY

The Wide Boulevard

This magazine is for the whole church. By Andrew Faiz

Letter One:

I did not know that the *Presbyterian Record* and staff are supporters of the Liberal Party of Canada by having political articles in there [sic] magazine. I read 1 Corinthians and could not find any passage relating to Trudeau's campaign. Mr. Trudeau is not even close to the Apostle Paul's footsteps. I guess you also now support there [sic] ideology and policies.

I know it does not affect anybody but I will not renew my subscription when it comes due.

Letter Two:

Is the *Presbyterian Record* so hard up for contributions and writers that it has to publish that smarmy piece by a Liberal flack?

The *Record* should keep itself equidistant from all political parties. I would be equally outraged if I were subjected to an article about Mulcair's Catholicism or Ambrose's evangelical Christianity.

I am minded to stop subscribing but for that article by Wardle, *Escape from Pakistan*. We need more pieces like that, not hagiographical nonsense by spinmeisters.

Letter Three:

I notice that a liberal hack is writing in the *Record*. Liberals use religions to further their aims and then dump them once elected. There are researchers in the Liberal party who purposely look up the Good Book to see if they



can find anything to help them on their way. Then you see Trudeau kneeling in a mosque reciting the Qur'an. They do anything to get votes. They tell lies and half-truths more than any party and they make promises only to break them once elected. They are the most corrupt party in Canada. Do you notice that Trudeau never criticises the Muslim extremists for killing and beheading Christians? That is because he has an ISIS-loving advisor who also told him what to say after the Boston bombing.

My response:

So you don't like Justin Trudeau or the Liberal party. That's fine. But what makes you think the magazine or the staff are supporters? That's quite a leap.

Each month we publish articles that take many different ideological positions, theologically, socially, politically. Some months may be

more conservative than liberal; some months may be more liberal than conservative. Every month seeks to represent the wide boulevard that is the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Of all the denominational publications I'm familiar with, the *Presbyterian Record* seeks to publish the voices from within its church. Month to month, the issue is written almost entirely by PCC members.

We take pains to do that. You may not like a singular voice; but rest assured this magazine works hard to represent the whole church.

So, the meanness in your letters hurts. It is as if you're saying the magazine should only serve your interests and if it fails to do that 100 per cent of the time, you are free to call us names and abandon us.

Many, many Presbyterian Canadians have served in political office over the years. And we have sought their voices every time. Quite a few have been Tories; a handful Grits; very few NDP. (There have been one or two who ran for the Greens.) This is important because our church's voice goes to Ottawa. I have met a few over the years at General Assembly. This is our church; and the magazine seeks to tell its story.

So, if there is any ideology we seek to promote, it is our denomination in all of its messy faithfulness.

God Bless,
A. 

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

BULLETIN

Community and World News



NATIONAL OFFICES

Listening First

Cultivating conversations is key for new head of Canadian Ministries.

By Amy MacLachlan

THE NEW ASSOCIATE secretary for Canadian Ministries says the first item on her to-do list is to listen.

"I think any new leader has to begin with a period of listening, so my priority is talking to as many people as I can," said Jennifer De Combe, who joined the Presbyterian Church's national offices in December. "What kind of resources do congregations need? What are people really hungry for? What do they feel will make a difference in their ministry and on the ground? I want to talk to them and hear those voices, and then combine that with my experience and make a combined vision of what can be in the future."

De Combe's arrival at the department tasked with "renewing and equipping" congregations across the denomination has sparked a few

murmurs amongst frustrated ministers. Some wonder if the position would be better filled by an ordained minister with years of traditional congregational experience. But De Combe isn't deterred. Her resumé includes a variety of experiences that have prepared her well for the task ahead, she said.

"That's the strength of my background," she said. "It's so varied and I've worked in ministry in a wide variety of settings. And I've been forced to be creative right from the get-go."

When De Combe was just 21 years old, she worked in the school system in Quebec as a pastoral animator—a job that came with no description other than being a resource to schools in the area of moral and religious development.

"I worked with 12 schools across the eastern townships, creating resources and programs for kids to help build and express their faith, and celebrate it as well. I was told to just use my gifts and to develop a program. And it was successful. It was an amazing experience."

From there she moved on to congregational ministry in Montreal, where she worked in Christian education, creating (among other things) a young adult program that "grew phenomenally" and eventually saw one student become ordained with two more currently on their way to be ministers.

From there she went to an organization that works with refugees, coordinating a transitional home for refugee claimants and an education program for their children.

"I wanted to get more hands-on experience in social justice work," said De Combe. "It was a chance to hear incredible stories, meet amazing people and discover the faith and resilience of the human spirit."

Last she went to Tyndale-St. Georges Community Centre, where she was the executive director. Located in Little Burgundy (a part of Montreal known for its high immigrant population), the area has the highest concentration of social housing in Canada. ➤

NATIONAL OFFICES, continued

"There are lots of challenges," said De Combe. "But there is also incredible spirit and amazing people to work with."

The centre is a joint grant-receiving ministry of the Presbyterian and Anglican Churches. They run 28 programs, with 40 people on staff.

"I have a broad range of experience in ministry ... so that kind of background equipped me well for this," she said. "I had to be creative, and develop things. And I had to develop a lot of faith in God, and rely on prayer and grace. ... The variety of people and contexts has helped me understand what ministry can be and what forms it can take."

She also has a Master in Theology to support her work in the field.

In a way, De Combe is continuing her fieldwork by visiting congregations and the church's grant-receiving ministries. Seeing ministry happening on the ground, in their particular context is an important component if you want to offer effective support, she said.

"I always felt that about Tyndale. People would be interested in what we were doing, but when they came to see it, they fell in love. There's something about seeing the passion

**'I had to be creative,
and develop things.
And I had to develop
a lot of faith in God,
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what forms it can take'**

of ministries at work. And then I can come back here and develop resources that can help them."

Canadian Ministries has come under some criticism of late from congregations, with some saying there is too much of an emphasis on administration,

and not enough of the kind of support that churches and ministers need.

De Combe admits there is certainly an administrative component, but it's done to serve congregations.

"Administration is a necessary piece, but the larger work is about connecting and growing together. The church is about people, so it always has to connect people and bring people together and connect in prayer."

She said when she came to the department, there "was already a conversation happening about what it means to be in partnership with congregations and the ministries we support. And I want to continue that conversation."

"I'm really looking to hear voices from across the country, so I invite anyone to reach out to me," said De Combe. "If there's something you need, we want to listen and we want to be responsive. And we also want to share what's happening. There are a lot of good news stories happening in the church, and we want to share that and let those stories help others." +

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's managing editor.

MAN FOUND DEAD IN THE PARKING LOT OF HANEY CHURCH

Around 4:30 a.m. on Dec. 19, police in Maple Ridge, B.C., found the body of 33-year-old Peter Bender shot dead in a

car in the parking lot of Haney Presbyterian Church.

Bender was a member of St. Luke's Roman Catholic Church and wasn't known to the congregation at Haney. But having such a tragedy occur on church property was a shock, said Rev. Dr. Gerard Booy, lead minister at the Presbyterian church.

"The sadness of it. It got us," he said. "He wasn't known to our people. There wasn't a sense of personal loss; more of a sadness that those types of things happen in our community, and even happen

on our church property."

Family and friends of Bender have set up a small memorial in the church parking lot. The youth group from St. Luke's has also held a prayer vigil there.

Booy attended the funeral mass for Bender on Jan. 8. "It was very, very moving," he said.

Bender was a husband and the father of two children, both under five years old.

The police investigation into the shooting is ongoing and few details have been released. + —Connie Wardle

Toronto BIA Protests Street Mission's Plans to Move into the Neighbourhood

SIGNS SAYING "NO YSM" were posted in shop windows and along the street in Toronto's Chinatown, and were carried in the hands of about 50 demonstrators who marched to City Hall on Jan. 5 to protest Yonge Street Mission's plans to move its youth centre into the neighbourhood.

The church-supported social services agency has purchased a 24,000 square foot building on Spadina Avenue—about a 20-minute walk west of its current location on Yonge Street—to become the future site of its Evergreen Centre for Street Youth.

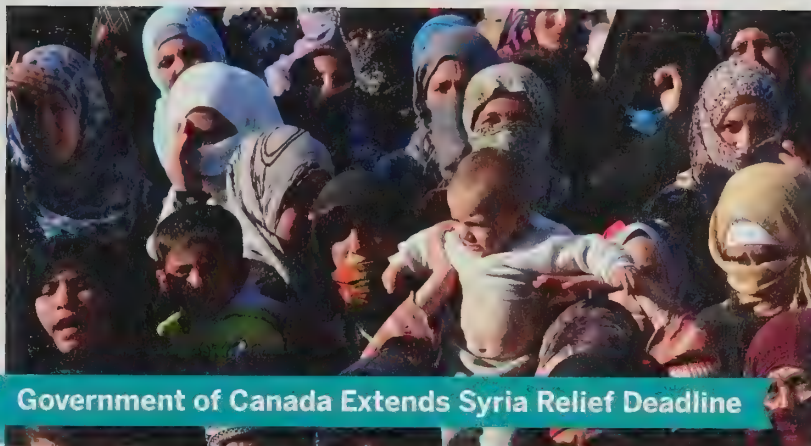
YSM took possession of the building on Jan. 8, but doesn't plan to move in until late in the summer of 2017. "So there's a lot of time for listening, dialogue and continued engagement to make sure when we do move in we have the best positive impact possible in the community," said Angela Draskovic, executive director of YSM.

The mission's plans are opposed by the Chinatown Business Improvement Area association, which organized the march and poster campaign.

Draskovic said she and her team knew there might be some concerns in the community when they announced the new location in November 2015. It's "a common experience for agencies of our nature when they go into a new neighbourhood," she said.

"I think it really boils down to concern about the impact we might have on businesses and tourism—so the economic impact of our presence—as well as concerns that we might have on community safety."

Evergreen provides a number of



Government of Canada Extends Syria Relief Deadline

The Government of Canada has extended its deadline for matching Syria relief donations to Feb. 29. For each dollar donated by Canadians to registered charities like Presbyterian World Service & Development in response to the conflict in Syria, the government will continue to contribute one dollar to its Syria Emergency Relief Fund, up to a total of \$100 million.

services to thousands of street-involved and homeless youth including a drop-in centre, warm meals, employment services, housing and educational opportunities, and health services.

The mission has hosted a series of meetings for local BIAs, residents associations and service providers, and plans to continue holding community consultations in the winter and into the spring. They plan to address concerns in their plans and will provide conceptual renderings for information and feedback from the community, Draskovic said.

She noted that the new building will be large enough for youth to come inside to wait for meals, something that is "a common shared objective" for both the youth and community members. In focus groups with youth who use YSM's services, almost all of the participants flagged the sidewalk outside of the current building as a place where they felt unsafe.

The *Record's* attempts to contact the BIA for comment were unsuccessful.

"The common goal that we would all share in the new community we're moving into is that it be a safe, welcoming, inclusive place for everybody," Draskovic said.

Not all of the signs along Spadina Avenue are in opposition to YSM. Knox Spadina, a prominent Presbyterian church, put "Yes YSM Here" on its sign to offer visible support to the mission.

"We value the mission and ministry of YSM to the poor and vulnerable in Toronto, finding in them a ministry that aligns with our own commitment to both the gospel and loving the city of Toronto," said Rev. Phil Reinders, senior minister. "While understanding some of the concerns of the Chinatown BIA, we think there's better possibilities open to everyone. Why can't we begin to imagine and work towards cooperative relationships where both businesses and the poor and vulnerable flourish together? Toronto needs both the Chinatown BIA and YSM."

—Connie Wardle

OP ED

Healing Nations

A report from the Paris Climate Change Conference.

By Jonathan Scott

PARIS HAD A TRYING 2015—there was the shooting at the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine offices in January, and then the attacks in November. A few weeks later the world gathered for the United Nation's Climate Change Conference, including Canada's new prime minister, along with provincial and municipal leaders.

"No, things are not quite back to normal," a friend confessed to me in a Paris bar on Saturday night midway through the conference. "People are still on edge."

Security searches your bag as you enter shops on the Champs-Élysées. Everyone in a café jumps a little more than normal when a car backfires. Still, some older men play bocce across from the Batalcan, where 89 people were killed on Nov. 13.

After the terrorist attacks, the Eiffel Tower was dark. During the conference, it lit up each night in green, with words flashing across the steel. A giant tree in the heart of the city. It even had a giant Christmas tree bauble.

The installation, the work of artist Naziha Mestaoui, included the chance to buy a tree for a 10-Euro donation: an image of your tree would flash across the Eiffel Tower, you would be notified and later a tree in your name would be planted in the developing world.

Everyone in a café jumps a little more than normal when a car backfires. Still, some older men play bocce across from the Batalcan, where 89 people were killed on Nov. 13

One of the words that flashed across the green-hued Eiffel Tower installation was "healing." Another was "nations." Here, in the heart of a great city, was a tree beside the river, proclaiming words from an ancient prophecy, reminding us that we are called to repair the world.

Along with world leaders, who received most of the coverage and made many headline-worthy commitments, nearly 1,000 municipal mayors from around the world also presented their initiatives.

Vancouver mayor Gregor Robertson presented Greenest City Action Plan and Renewable City Strategy to Paris. Montreal's Denis Codere took suggestions from a public consultation. Toronto's John Tory repeatedly stated that the battle against greenhouse gases begins with cities, and reiterated his mantra

for more public transit options.

In an email to me, Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie is quick to praise municipal projects, with her chief of staff following up within minutes to boast of even more initiatives, from "a Living Green master plan" to historic transit investments. Mississauga, a city just west of Toronto, has "converted all of our lights to LED to save energy consumption" with "a goal to plant one million trees and expand our urban forest."

It's interesting to note how changing light bulbs and tree planting, such simple tasks, remain such an effective contribution to the fight against climate change. ☀

Jonathan Scott is a member of St. John's, Bradford, Ont., and was in Paris for the COP21 Conference.

Faith

Deepening your relationship with God

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY

Love and Other Stories

Spoken in the half-light.

By Katie Munnik

MARGARET ATWOOD SAYS that February brings pewter mornings and love will do us in. Dark thoughts for a still-dark month. I think I'll hold instead to February's lingering shadowed evenings because there is something about the shadows that helps stories to grow.

Maybe it's that half-light creates liminal spaces where imagination opens more easily. Think romantic candle-lit dinners for two. Or the way your children's faces change in the light of birthday candles. In those moments between light and dark, we can somehow see more clearly. Important things become visible.

At bedtime in our house, the night-light is turned on along with a reading lamp for the storyteller, then the kids hunker down in their blankets. >

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY, continued

Usually, the Spouse reads and I cuddle with our two older kids, but sometimes our youngest child joins us as well, if he hasn't already been settled off to sleep. This month we're reading William Goldman's *The Princess Bride*. If you have only seen the movie, it's a treat of a book. It's darker and scarier than the movie, but it's also funnier and far more rewardingly ridiculous. Such a crazy swash-buckling romantic adventure. We are thoroughly loving reading it aloud together. And, in February, love stories are best considered seasonal.

We're all falling a little in love with Wesley, the farm boy turned righteous pirate and protector of the princess. And because we have such a strong hero, it's easy to expect a happy ending. That's the way stories work, right?

But then the narrator interjects:

"This book says 'life's not fair' and I'm telling you, one and all, you better believe it... there's death coming up, and you better understand this: some of the wrong people die. Be ready for it."

Are we? Ready? Ever? I don't know. Probably not.

You might say that William Goldman is just dishing out a healthy dose of realism in the midst of what is otherwise a fantastic, though edgy, fairytale. But I think there is something else going on here.

This author's interjection makes us aware of our own assumptions about story. We assume that good will win out. We assume there will be adventures and struggles, even suffering, but that happiness will prevail in the end. That's how stories work. I might even go so far as to say that is why we read stories in the first place. They confirm our suspicion that there is pattern and purpose to life.

I'm not sure that this is a bad

assumption. In fact, I think there's something rather faith-filled going on here. But there's also a brave honesty in Goldman's assertion that life isn't fair. Because it isn't. Any of my kids

Stories are always plural, and the Bible itself is a library of stories. We have layer after layer of lived story there expressed as history, biography, poetry, song, fable and every other possible genre you can dream up

could tell you that. Just like any other kids and the prophets and the rest of us. Life ain't fair.

So what do we do with that? We take it to God. And God shapes and reshapes our imaginations, opening things up so we can grow into maturity and stretch out into a deeper, more richly imagined hope.

Over Christmas, we played a lot of story cubes at home. These are like dice, but with pictures instead of numbers, and they have proved really addictive in my family. You shake them up like fury then let them roll out of your hand and onto the table. You look. You wonder. Find connections. Tell a tale. It was mesmerising to see how patterns—silly, courageous and

beautiful—emerged as we dreamed up stories together.

Storytelling and storybuilding are not only about finding patterns and hope. They are also ways in which we build the world. The poet David Ignatow writes: "what imagination does with reality is the reality we live by." Stories deepen us.

Sometimes, we talk about "the Christian story" as if there were only one. Neither our history nor our faith work like that. Stories are always plural, and the Bible itself is a library of stories. We have layer after layer of lived story there expressed as history, biography, poetry, song, fable and every other possible genre you can dream up. Except maybe science fiction, though I'm ready to discuss the possibility that Revelation might fit into that category for some people.

We are storied people and our lives have been shaped by countless stories and retellings of stories. Not just the big seasonal ones, but all the quiet anecdotes, too. Hearing others' stories help us understand our own. Sharing our stories helps us to connect with others.

We light candles and, in the half-light, we listen to old stories, letting ourselves ask the wondering questions, making space to listen to the answers our children offer. Light changes as we live and grow, colours shift and we find new layers of meaning. Our own stories become fused with older stories, others' stories, new and stranger stories. Patterns emerge. Perspectives shift and sometimes all that change brings about astounding beauty. ✚

Katie Munnik is author of the Messy Table, a blog at presbyterianrecord.ca. She lives in Cardiff, Wales.



PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

Lent on the Land

A call to live together.

By Laurence DeWolfe

A PUBLICATION DEADLINE sometimes determines what a writer writes, when he's writing for a date long after his column is due. Writing for Lent in Advent is a challenge. Events at the time of writing can also influence an author.

I'm reflecting on our reading from Deuteronomy within days of the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report. It's hard to read a text that sets a liturgy of thanksgiving for a people who believe God has given them someone else's land.

It's hard to read Israel's holy history without thinking of Canada's unholy history. It's one thing to come into a new place as refugees from oppression. It's quite another thing to come and drive out most of the people who already live there. Conquest in God's name is still violence and theft.

There's an old saying: "History is written by winners." Holy history is written by people who believe God gave them the victory. It doesn't even take a generation before the victors believe the land was always theirs >

PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY, continued

by right. Let's give Deuteronomy its due. Written long after the conquest, Deuteronomy calls descendants of the winners to remember the whole story. OK, their side of the story. And be humble. Recall their humble origins and give thanks to God. "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor..."

There's also a thread of hope in Deuteronomy. At least by the time it was written the population of the Promised Land was more diverse than other Old Testament writings would lead us to believe. The instructions for celebration include "the aliens who reside among you." The people must share the story, and all the bounty that God has given them and their households. The neighbours are still called "aliens," as if they don't have as much right to live there as the Israelites do. They are "other than," after all.

Back in June the church partners, including the Presbyterian Church in Canada, responded to the TRC's Findings and Calls to Action with a

**Through prayer
and discipline seek
to live more humbly,
with more gratitude,
on land that you may
own but isn't really
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some mighty acts
of deliverance**

statement that began, "It is with gratitude and humility that we are here today..." In December, Moderator Karen Horst responded to the TRC final report with mixed emotions. "Along with ongoing sadness and shame at what we now know about this legacy and the part our church played in it, I am also encouraged and hopeful." Now that so much more of the truth has been told, so many stories that were not heard before, that could not be told because of the pain throbbing within them, there is hope.

On the First Sunday in Lent are you still looking for a Lenten challenge? How about this? Through prayer and discipline seek to live more humbly, with more gratitude, on land that you may own but isn't really yours. Your ancestors may have come to it, as mine did, through some mighty acts of deliverance. Remember that story. Recover the gratitude of past generations, but lament their complicity in conquest. If you and your family have come more recently, gratitude is still fresh and the story isn't forgotten. You are no longer aliens, despite the efforts of so many of your neighbours to label you and "other" you out of the celebration of God's goodness to all. Even Deuteronomy admits you belong.

The call to live together on the land, humbly and thankfully, is more than an invitation. It's an imperative. Deuteronomy is driven by that imperative. It's a version of holy history for people who need to work at remembering who they are and whose they are. It's about following God's Law in humility, living in gratitude for the covenant. It's still a one-sided story and an exclusive covenant. We must wrestle with that. But the imperative remains. +

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe is senior minister at Glenview, Toronto.



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RENEWAL

The Gold Standard

Loving as God loves us.

By Fred Stewart

FEBRUARY IS USUALLY the coldest month for us in Central Ontario; though friends and lovers do have an opportunity to share a little warmth halfway through on Valentine's Day.

Love is a pretty central theme to Jesus's teachings and example. Not only was love commanded but it was set out as the primary factor for the discerning of true believers.

In our time and culture the word love is thrown around pretty loosely. It can be used in the context of food, art, momentary intimacy, music and almost anywhere else. So, as Christ followers, how do we know love?

The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 gives the following tests (as translated by Eugene Peterson in *The Message*):

"So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

Love never gives up.

Love cares more for others than for self.

Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.

Love doesn't strut,

Doesn't have a swelled head,

Doesn't force itself on others,

Isn't always 'me first,'

Doesn't fly off the handle,

Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,

Doesn't revel when others grovel,

Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,

Puts up with anything,

Trusts God always,

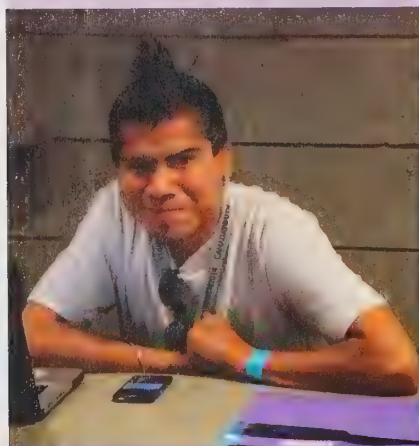
Always looks for the best, >

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RENEWAL, continued

*Never looks back,
But keeps going to the end."*

It takes supernatural help to love like this. It is the kind of love all of us would love to receive. In honest moments we know this is extremely difficult to give. Yet I believe it is the gold standard for love that all of us should strive for.

Paul ends this chapter with these words: "But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love."

He has linked three commands together. It diminishes his meaning if we pull them apart. They call us to love as God loves by making sure we stay close to the source of this perfect love.

"Trust steadily" requires daily intimacy with our Lord and Saviour Jesus. "Hope unswervingly" comes from living in the atmosphere of hope we can be surrounded with as we experience God's faithfulness from day to day and generation to generation. "Love extravagantly" calls us to love as the Triune God has always loved us. It is a love that is unconditional, unending and completely void of self benefit. Further, it is a love that takes no account of potential hurts and betrayals. It is love in its purest form.

Love God with our everything: heart, soul, mind and strength. Love our neighbour as ourselves. These are the greatest commandments and prescriptions for renewal.

Renewal of self and renewal of community will lead to renewal of our world. Thy Kingdom come. +

Rev. Fred Stewart is executive director of the Renewal Fellowship and minister at St. Andrew's, Bolsover, and Woodville Community churches.



SHARING WITNESS

Horrific History

A single photograph holds a precious memory.

By Vivian Ketchum

I HOLD A PICTURE OF MY PARENTS in my hand. The picture is faded slightly, but the memories I have of them are very dear. The picture was taken at my brother's wedding many years ago. My dad's hair is gray and short; his face is very brown and dark. My dad was an outdoor man and it showed on his face. Leathered with sharp features. High cheekbones. My mom is wearing a flowered dress and her black hair is done up nicely. They are wearing their Sunday best for their son's wedding. Nothing wrong with the picture; except that both of my parents attended different residential schools in Kenora, Ont. This is the only picture I have of them. I want to know more of my parents' history.

I found a website called the National

Residential School Survivor Society which had a link to the two schools my parents went to in Kenora. My dad went to the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian School run by the Presbyterian Church. I found his name in an admission form on the site. Andrew Ketchum. Written in neat handwriting on a grainy piece of paper. My dad was only in Grade 7 and the year was 1937. He was from Shoal Lake First Nation.

As I read his name my mind tried to process the information. I was feeling a wide range of emotions: excitement that I found a link to my past and my dad's past, yet a feeling of deep sorrow that I was the second generation of a residential school survivor. My fingers gently stroked the webpage where I read my dad's name, >

SHARING WITNESS, continued



I was feeling a wide range of emotions: excitement that I found a link to my past and my dad's past, yet a feeling of deep sorrow that I was the second generation of a residential school survivor

as if reading it was not enough. A sense of understanding of who my dad was and why he behaved a certain way dawned on me.

I skimmed through the other pages and found my mom's name on the one for St. Mary's Catholic Indian School. My mother's name was written in bold type; she was 12 years old, from Dalles First Nation. I also found my auntie's name there. An eerie link to my past.

My parents never discussed with me or my other siblings what happened to them in those schools. The only time my mom mentioned it was to tell me about when they cut her hair. My mother was beautiful, with long black hair that hung down to her waist. She laughed as she told me of how the boys looked at her with her long black hair. My stepfather nodded

in agreement as he listened to her story. "Then they came to cut my hair and I looked like a boy," she said. I can clearly recall her sharing that story; there were tears in her eyes as if it had happened the day before.

Both of my parents passed away many years ago. I only have their names on an admission form on a website to say they once attended residential schools. How they tried to raise their family is part of that history. A deeper understanding of what happened to them in residential school was in the pages of this website. Not to them directly, but to other students—bad food, bad medical care, beatings. I even read stories of children running away, desperate to return home, only to have the local RCMP dispatched to find them. I viewed the pictures of young

children with their hair cut short and bangs hanging above their eyes. Images of my mother's story came to mind. Now I can understand why my parents didn't share their stories.

I sit and hold the one photograph I have of my parents, taken at a family wedding. Good memories that can be shared over and over again. One that I can share with my grandchildren. I have done what my parents did with their children—I never fully shared my story of my experiences of residential school with my kids. Sometimes family history is too horrific to pass on to the next generation. +

Vivian Ketchum is Anishinabe of Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation, outside of Kenora, Ont. She lives in Winnipeg.

Life

Thoughts and inspiration for your daily life



FAMILY

Surprised by Joy

Noticing the little things.

By Megan Leanderson

ARE YOU FAMILIAR with the concept of choosing a word of the year? The idea is to pick a word to focus on, meditate on and reflect on in daily life throughout the year. In January 2015, I chose the word joy.

At that time, when I was on the verge of moving to a new country and in the midst of countless life changes, joy was perhaps the word I was most seeking. I held tight to that word all year. When I doubted my husband's and my decision to move to Canada with our two-year-old son and >

FAMILY, continued

leave friends and family back home in Charlotte, North Carolina, I clung to the joy of taking a break from corporate America and focusing on motherhood. I sought joy in the little moments of life.

This word-of-the-year practice provided reflection on joy in a different way, but after eight months of the project, I couldn't help but wonder if there was something more to it.

Late last August, we stumbled on one of the oldest churches in Toronto while ambling around the city on a mini exploration. The bells of St. James Cathedral chimed on that Saturday afternoon and my son was delighted. I was pulled in by the open doors.

With towering, ornate gothic ceilings and plentiful stained glass, St. James is beautiful. As my son took it all in, a smile spread over his face. His joy for exploration and adventure was incredible to witness. That is all that I ever

hoped I could give him from this experience of moving to Canada. And right in the middle of that church, on a random Saturday, more than halfway through the year, it hit me like a ton of bricks—joy. The force of it took me by surprise.

This word of the year journey was not intended as an exercise in faith, just as our decision to move away from “home” wasn't intended to be an exercise in faith. But God has a beautiful way of sending you a message when He really wants you to hear it. On that day, I got the message loud and clear.

The next day at church, wouldn't you know it, joy was the topic of the sermon. And as we sang Hymn 474 in the *Book of Praise*, it was as if the words were written on my heart. A joyful surprise in the best way:

*“The joy of God comes close.
Where faith encounters fears,
where heights and depths of life are*

found through smiles and tears.

*The joy of God is here to stay,
embracing those who walk the Way;
the joy of God is here to stay.”*

MONTHS HAVE PASSED. Life goes up and down; there are challenging days and long weeks parenting a toddler. Yet gratitude multiplies when I look at it through this lens.

For months my son has been asking me to say the Our Father during nightly prayers. On one particular night, instead of silently listening, he recited the prayer along with me. Tears welled in my eyes when I told him how proud I was of him. And he said something I'll never forget: “My heart feels so happy; I love it when Mommy teaches me things.”

Again, joy, pure and simple, surprised me. I recognized that the challenges of parenting a toddler are also an exercise in faith. And my greatest endeavour as a parent will be to allow him to feel that joy, too.

Now that a new year has begun, I see that this word of the year challenge took me on a parallel journey of deepening my faith. As I look to 2016, which I'm sure will bring many new adventures, I will keep these lessons with me, and will better appreciate that at the intersection of some of life's biggest challenges, there are moments of unparalleled joy. I can't wait for the next surprise. +

Megan Leanderson is a wife and mother transplanted to Southern Ontario by way of Charlotte, North Carolina. She writes about her family's adventures, both big and small, at: pinktogreenblog.com, where you can read about her word of the year for 2016, courage. She attends Knox, Oakville, Ont.



BRIARWOOD

Seeking a Minister

Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Beaconsfield, Quebec is an active congregation on the West Island of Montreal that loves children, youth, adults and seniors. We are seeking a minister who is able to work with all ages, connect with young families, is a strong communicator and teacher of the Christian faith, and has a warm heart with a big smile! Our focus on young people and families remains a priority, and our congregation is proud and excited to offer two services each Sunday morning, offering alternate forms of worship for members, adherents and visitors.

If you see yourself in this role, or desire to have further information, we invite you to send your profile to the Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries, Interim Moderator, Telephone (514) 288-5256 Ext.209; Email: rdevries@presbyteriancollege.ca. Our congregational profile can be found at www.briarwoodpresbyterianchurch.ca



The Instrumental After-school Group playing their ukeleles.

MINISTRY

Reaching Out Through Music

El Sistema is changing lives in Lethbridge.

By Jon Helm

ST. ANDREW'S, LETHBRIDGE, ALTA., is like many Canadian Presbyterian congregations: the majority of active members are older and there is a constant concern about declining numbers.

When I became the choir director in 2008, I accepted these concerns as perfectly normal. When I was approached by session two years ago about restarting a junior choir, my first thought was, "With whom?" Did they expect me to have a choir of four? Then I remembered El Sistema, a music program I once nearly moved east to work for.

El Sistema was founded in 1975 by Jose

Antonio Abreu, a musician and educator in Caracas, Venezuela. The stated purpose was to provide "free classical music education [to] impoverished children." Forty years later there are 400 music centres in Venezuela with 700,000 students getting four hours of training and rehearsal per week.

Graduates of the program have gone on to become leading professionals not only in music, but in other fields such as medicine and education. I worked with a musician who said the program got him out of poverty.

Lethbridge is far from Caracas, not only >

MINISTRY, continued

geographically, but culturally and socially; yet poverty exists. Food banks cannot keep up with the need; homeless shelters are overflowing. There is a need for something here.

I gave session a counter proposal. Make it a free music program, open it to the community and allow anyone, grades one to 12, to attend. The spark was ignited. Permission was granted at a special congregational meeting. The project had a three-year term.

I quit my day job to run El Sistema, and in the fall of 2013, the St. Andrew's Music Program (StAMP) began with four children in the basement. By the end of that first year, we had taught about 28 kids, including preschool children in a "parent and tot" music group. We also created two seniors' music outreach programs to perform in local care facilities. We finished our second year in June with attendance peaking at 40 children and 30 adults.

Has this program solved the problems of the church? Well, it certainly hasn't hurt. The new Sunday school coordinator has seen an overall jump in attendance.

Youth no longer need to attend other churches because of the lack of programs at St. Andrew's. And our seniors have been given more opportunities to minister to the community through StAMP. Between the seniors' music outreach and the youth performance group we entertained at least 1,000 residents in local care facilities over the last two years.

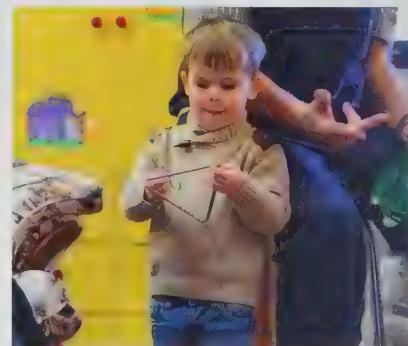
I still hear grumblings about how we're not seeing a direct effect on the congregation—which, I presume, refers to increased membership and financial support. However, we have attracted people of other denominations and many non-religious to our afterschool music programs, with a few starting to attend on Sundays. If the only reason to run a program like this is to increase membership, then we've lost our purpose. The goal is not to convert, but to build bridges and show how through music we are all connected.

A huge obstacle now faces us: the funding has all but run out. This type of program, unfortunately, is ineligible for many arts grants because it is associated with a church. Will the

congregation still be willing and able to keep this program going after its third year? We don't know, but we are seeing some truly amazing effects. A mother with a child in the afterschool program told me that she had recommended the program to another family from her church. One day, the new student approached his mother and the mom who told them about the program. He asked his mother, "Is this the woman who changed my life?"

Sometimes we never know the influence we have on others. Sometimes we just need the chance to try something new, and a congregation that is willing to go along for the ride. +

Jon Helm is the music director at St. Andrew's, Lethbridge, Alta.



Clockwise from top: Parent and Tot music program; after-school choir; a Seniors' Music/Meadowlarks performance at a local care facility.



St. Andrew's, Fergus, Ont.

HISTORY

Poetry, Hymns, War

How Waterloo-Wellington presbytery has made its mark on the world.

By Tess Bridgewater

LAST SUMMER I took a meandering tour to explore some of the history hidden in plain sight amongst the Presbyterian churches of Waterloo-Wellington presbytery. There are currently 32 congregations in the Ontario presbytery, urban and rural, stretching from Mount Forest to the north, Cambridge to the south, Guelph to the east and Baden to the west.

Let me touch upon only a few stories from the many I encountered.

A church with a little-known claim to fame is St. Andrew's, in the historic city of Guelph. Founded in 1828, it is Guelph's oldest

congregation and is located close to the birthplace of Lt. Col. John McCrae, author of the war poem, *In Flanders Fields*.

The McCraes were longtime Presbyterians and members of St. Andrew's. A plaque marks the family pew at the front of the sanctuary, and there is a stained glass window dedicated to McCrae. Part of a prominent military family, his father raised an artillery battalion in Guelph in 1915. It's still in existence.

The internationally renowned poem was the inspiration for the iconic poppy, adopted in 1920 as the emblem of an annual Day >

HISTORY, continued



St. Andrew's, Hespeler, Ont.

of Remembrance that commemorated Armistice Day, Nov. 11, 1918. King George V approved the proposal.

The 100th anniversary of the poem was remembered last year with local and international commemorative events. It is an inspiring story of a soldier poet and celebrated doctor who sparked an international symbol of remembrance and received his early spiritual training in a grey stone church in the relatively unknown city of Guelph.

About 15 kilometres north on Highway 6, St. Andrew's in Fergus gazes benignly down on the town from a leafy hilltop. Founded in 1854 and said to be the oldest church between Hamilton and Owen Sound, it remains a lively centre of the community with a vibrant music program that includes local fiddlers, guitarists and a men's choir. The church also supports a mission in Nicaragua and four schools in Haiti.

This church too has a little known worldwide connection. Were it not for

George Clephane, an erstwhile remittance man from Scotland who lies buried in the churchyard, we would not be singing Hymn 347 more than a century later. Clephane was the inspiration for this revivalist hymn entitled, "There were ninety and nine."

Young George, the black sheep son of Andrew Clephane (the sheriff of Fife and Kinross in Scotland and a kinsman of Sir Walter Scott), had been shipped to Fergus in 1843, ostensibly to take up farming. It was hoped a stint in the colonies would cure him of his heavy drinking. But he had no interest in farming; his only passions were riding around on a fine horse, and the demon drink—unfortunately fuelled by a cheap and plentiful distillery in Fergus.

George was on the road to ruin; one wet and windy day in 1851 he fell from his horse and died. He was buried at St. Andrew's. This would have been the end of the story but for George's family back home in Scotland. His heartbroken

younger sister, Elizabeth Clephane, who wrote poetry for a hobby, penned a poem in his memory. Upon her own early death in 1869, her poems were published in a Scottish paper. They were read by the well known American Evangelists Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey, who happened to be touring Scotland. They set the verses to music and took them back to Pentecostal songbooks in America. Thus George

**This church too has
a little known
worldwide connection.**

**Were it not for
George Clephane, an
erstwhile Remittance
Man from Scotland
who lies buried in
the churchyard, we
would not be singing
Hymn 347 more than
a century later**

Clephane, "the lost sheep," had an influence in death that he never had in life. Many visitors still come to the peaceful churchyard to look for the grave, but the original headstone has now been moved inside the church for preservation.

This is not the only headstone of note. Set in the wall is another intriguing piece of history. "Here lies Robert McGillivray, died February 30, 1854," it states. The mystery of the non-existent date has never been solved—did the stonemason use the old calendar or perhaps he, too, visited the distillery once too often?

CHURCH LIFE

Out of the Past

A historic organ comes to the rescue of St. Paul's, Wiarton, Ont.


By Cynthia Farrar and Sandy Richardson

Cambridge was at the forefront of Presbyterianism in Ontario and there are several long established churches around the town. Both St. Andrew's in Hespeler and Knox in Preston have long histories and are active congregations, but the oldest and most attractive churches dominate Queen's Square in the old town of Galt.

Knox was founded in 1844, with Rev. John Bayne, founder of the Free Presbyterian Church of Canada. He was also involved in the founding of Queen's University and Knox College. Across the square, Central dates from 1880, with roots to 1857 and a small church on Melville Street. Both churches with their tall spires and stone facades add grace and dignity to Queen's Square but why, I wondered, are there two Presbyterian churches staring at each other across a public square?

The secret lies with Rev. Bayne. Scots-born and proud, he picked up on controversy brewing back home over British interference in the Scottish Presbyterian Church.

In 1844, Bayne led a movement to break the Presbyterian Church in Canada's "connection with the Church of Scotland" on doctrinal and other reasons. Twenty-three ministers in the Canadian church followed him; as did a majority of his congregation. Those in the congregation who didn't join Bayne later founded Central across the street.

These are just a few of the dynamic dramas in one presbytery. Read the full-length story online. 

Tess Bridgewater is a freelance writer in Cambridge, Ont. She is the author of A Wartime Memoir: Finding my Footprints in Sarum.

THE CONGREGATION OF ST. PAUL'S in Wiarton, Ont., has been celebrating the work, the worship and the word of God for 136 years—123 of those years in its present building. The building is magnificent. The oak pews hug the pulpit in a semi-circle providing everyone with a perfect view of the communion table. There is something to be said for the beauty of old buildings. Conversely, old buildings like this one were not made with the elderly or disabled in mind. St. Paul's sanctuary is not accessible, providing us with a ponderous dilemma: how to alter the old to accommodate all, and then, even more daunting, how to fund it?

We have taken the first step and established an accessibility fund. We have done a lot of praying along with number crunching. We are looking into accessibility grants but in the meantime we have looked to ourselves to see what we have to offer to the community. And we do have something: our beautiful pipe organ.

The pipe organ at St. Paul's was built and installed by Breckels and Matthews of Toronto in March 1906, 14 years after the first services were held in this building in March 1892. At that time, it cost \$1,500 and was purchased with the assistance of a \$750 Carnegie grant. It has been in regular use at worship services ever since.


The organ has two manuals, 16 stops and couplers, 515 pipes, and features the original tubular pneumatic action and cone tuning. It was originally operated with a manual bellows that

still exists, in working condition, behind the choir loft; an electric blower was installed mid-last century. The casework is oak and the pipes on the façade feature their original hand-painted decoration. Electronic chimes were added to the organ in 1965.

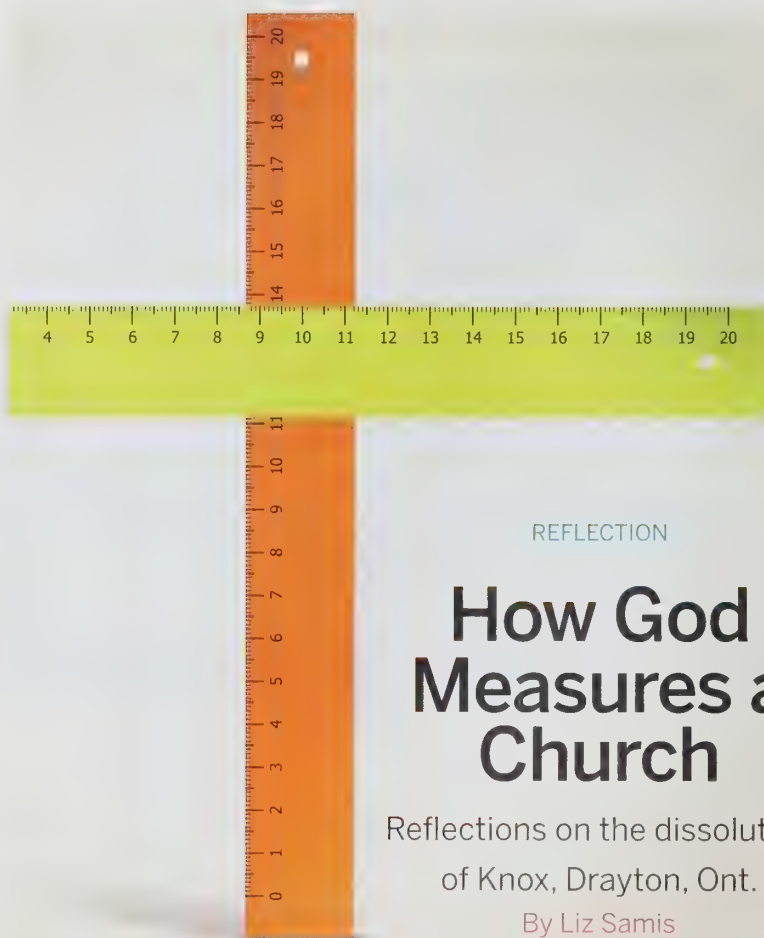
Breckels and Matthews, the builder, was in operation from the 1890s to 1911, when the firm became the Matthews Church Organ Company. This company went out of business in the 1930s. Other Breckels and Matthews organs can be found in Ontario, but most have undergone extensive alterations.

The organ at St. Paul's is one of very few Breckels and Matthews organs still in its original condition. Last September, St. Paul's hosted an organ recital and hymn sing. David Tupper was the featured organist. Tupper served as an educator in both vocal and instrumental music for 33 years, as well as director of music at St. George's Anglican, and St. Andrew's, Owen Sound.

We raised \$1,390.

How apropos, using something of the past to provide for the future. And as we see it, it was win-win for everyone. The larger community, who otherwise may never have entered a Presbyterian church, also got to hear the wonderful sounds of our organ and we have taken our next step towards accessibility. 

Cynthia Farrar is a member of the board of managers at St. Paul's. Sandy Richardson is former chair of the board.



REFLECTION

How God Measures a Church

Reflections on the dissolution
of Knox, Drayton, Ont.

By Liz Samis

HOW DO YOU WRITE the history of a church?

Do you note all the work done on the building? Do you note all the ministers who served the church, the dates they served, the clerks of session, who served on the board of managers? What about all the activities over all the years, including the ham and scalloped potato supper, strawberry social or the 30-Hour Famine?

I wonder how God measures the history of a church. We were as a church created to be “the bride of Christ.” What does that mean or entail?

As I think back over my life at Knox, Drayton, Ont., it was the little things not written down on paper that

I remember. It is the Holy Spirit-filled prayers that the ministers shared that touched my heart and convicted me of an area of my life that needed to be corrected; or a sermon or message that gave me comfort and seemed to be preached exactly for the thing I was struggling with or going through.

It was a feeling of peace and joy knowing that I was forgiven and loved by the Lord Almighty. Or when I heard the word of God preached when my heart was hard and I could not or did not listen or receive. And it was other times when I felt my mind and heart were connected and in tune with the things that matter the most to Jesus. It was sometimes going through the

motions, but other times it was being actively engaged and touched to the core. It was talking about things that matter. It was also times when I felt disconnected and alone.

I recall the special moments of children with all their life and laughter sharing their week with you and greeting you with a hug at the door; the faith of a child that I wished I had, with all its innocence. It was hearing the joyful sounds of our church family as we laughed together at ourselves and our ways and drawing together; or, supporting each other when a member had lost a child and needed to hear a message of hope.

It says in the book of John that Jesus did so many things it could not be contained in a book. As I reflect back, I have so many memories and things that are in me now as a result of attending and being a part of this church, I could not write them down or even articulate them. I am thankful for the life of this church (the people), for the preaching of God’s word each and every week and for having the opportunity to continue to grow in God’s love. As God is in our midst in the sanctuary, so too has He been with us as we go out of this building into a world that needs to see His love. We are and can be the heart, the hands and feet of Jesus wherever we go. God does not measure things like we do as humans, so I know that God sees and hears and knows all about the history of this church and in the end that is what matters. +

Liz Samis was clerk of session at Knox, Drayton, Ont. After 133 years, the church closed its doors on Sept. 27, 2015. At the closing service interim moderator Rev. Kathy Morden told the congregation: “The church may be closing but you have made a difference, which will continue on throughout your life.”

Focus

Stories of mission, ministry and community



CAMPING

The Ministry of Camp

Creating a safe faith community.

By Shalini Rajack-Sankarlal

LAST SUMMER, I had the joy and privilege of being the chaplain at Glen Mohr camp for one week. My husband and two children were able to join me during that time.

My first confession about this experience is that I had never been to camp before.

My second confession is that my children, one of whom is a >

Cairn Family of Camps

CAMPING, continued

teenager and the other a pre-teen, also never went to camp before. Their choice, not ours.

My third confession, a result of my second, is that we had two slightly unwilling campers with us as we arrived that first day.

My advantage arising out of these confessions is that I had no pre-conceived ideas or expectations. I could experience and see the impact camp can have on young people from an unbiased perspective.

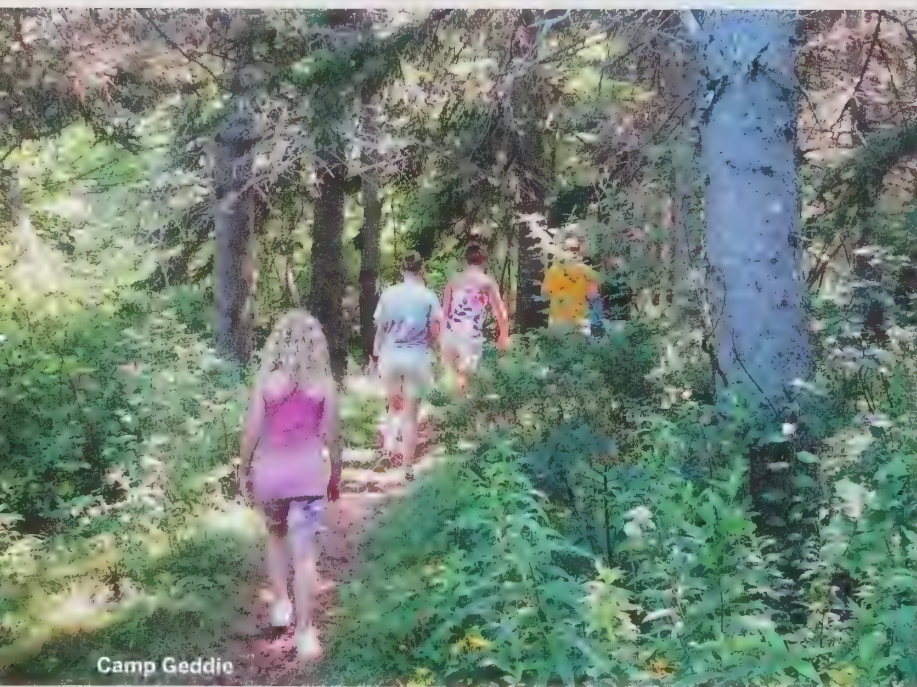
In my role as chaplain, I chose to integrate with the campers as much as possible. A benefit was being able to experience the wide range of activities that Glen Mohr has to offer, and let me tell you, they are fun! The greater benefit, however, came from getting to better know the campers themselves.

One of my more memorable moments arose in an impromptu

Their eagerness to talk highlighted their need for the freedom to present their doubts and the need for a safe place to ask their questions

manner. The campers were playing a game that required them to divide into groups that were situated in different locations, each with the aim of protecting themselves against being “invaded.” As this involved lots of running, I decided to sit it out. As the group of campers nearest to me kept watch, they started casually conversing with each other. They talked about all the fun things going on at school and with family. This transitioned into the less than pleasant experiences some of them had, with one camper expressing her grief over the recent loss of a relative. The other members of the group lovingly expressed their sympathies. Another turn in the conversation led them to discuss their struggles with reconciling death with what they believed Christianity said about it. They invited me to join them and, just like that, an in-depth discussion about faith began.

As we sat on the deck, under the sun, the campers soon forgot that they were in the middle of a game. They talked and they asked questions. They had a lot of questions. “How do I know for sure ...?” “Do you really believe that ...?” “I know someone who ...” “I have a friend who ... and does that make her bad?” Their eagerness to talk highlighted their need for the freedom to present their doubts and the need for a safe place to ask their questions. Underlying all the questions was the desire to know how to affirm their faith and how to respond to situations because of their faith. Not much different to what some adults are seeking. We talked until we could hear the sounds of laughter as another group approached us.



Camp Geddle

PHOTO COURTESY OF CAMP GEDDIE



It reminded them that they were in the middle of a game and were supposed to be protecting their area. The discussion ended. Certainly not all of their questions were answered. We barely scratched the surface, but they have a lifetime of experiences to go through before some of those questions may be fully resolved, if ever. But at least they have been given a starting point and hopefully one day they can fondly look back to their time on that deck along with many other times that may come.

I followed up with some of the campers in that group afterward and had many conversations with other campers as well during my week there. But that moment on the deck had the greatest effect on me. It made me acutely aware that faith is definitely of interest to our youth; or, more precisely they have a desire for it to be relevant to their lives. Our youth have a yearning to transition from merely knowing about the caricatures that we sometimes create out of the biblical stories towards enabling these stories to develop into

examples and testimonies that point to how God works in their lives.

This is something that goes beyond choosing the correct curriculum or having the most dynamic youth group ever. Sometimes it requires them stepping out of the church basement and out of the building and into an environment where they know another safe faith community exists and is waiting for them. This is camp community. It is here that I witnessed youth being able to come together to develop important skills, scream as they went zip lining, grow in confidence, encourage each other, comfort each other in times of grief, play Twister with paint and question the faith teachings they currently see as imposed upon them so that one day they can eventually claim this faith as their own. What a truly glorious thing.

Oh, and on a personal parental level, I saw this in my own children. Both of them asked to return to camp next year even before we left that last day. ☘

Rev. Shalini Rajack-Sankarlal is minister at St. Andrew's, Ajax, Ont.

Presbyterian Camps

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Camp Keir
campkeir.ca

NOVA SCOTIA

Camp Geddie
campgeddie.ca

Camp MacLeod
pccweb.ca/campmacleod

QUEBEC

Camp d'action biblique
cabqc.ca

Gracefield Christian Camp
and Retreat Centre
gracefieldcamp.ca

ONTARIO

Cairn Family of Camps
ilovecamp.org

Camp Kintail
campkintail.ca

Huron Feathers Centre
huronfeathers.ca

Camp Kummoniwannago
campk.on.ca

SASKATCHEWAN

Camp Christopher
campchristopher.ca

ALBERTA

Camp Kannawin
campkannawin.ca

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Camp Douglas
campdouglas.ca

Dutch Harbour Christian Camp
dutchharbourchristiancamp.
wordpress.com

Camp VIP
pccweb.ca/vancouver-island-
presbytery/camp-vip

OUTREACH

Coming Home

Connecting with community changes everything.

By Keith Randall



IT WAS A 2014 midwinter Sunday at Montreal West Presbyterian Church. The sanctuary was satisfyingly nearly full. Worshippers represented numerous demographics. A young woman led prayer and told the children a story. The Ghanaian student minister preached a rousing sermon that he admitted might have strayed from staid Presbyterian tradition. A 20-voice Cameroonian drum-accompanied male choir rocked an African hymn. Aeternal, a local gospel group, sang in the service and stuck around for post-service encores, then everyone gathered for food and fellowship and to welcome visitors from a Montreal community centre.

What a difference a decade has made! In 2004, Montreal West was facing closure. This historic landmark founded in 1891 in the city's "garden suburb" had seen Sunday attendance shrink to about 15. Today, Montreal West counts some 140 members and adherents, many of them English-speaking Cameroonians from nearby suburbs of Lasalle and Lachine, who have made the congregation one of the fastest growing in the presbytery. What made the difference?

Maybe it was luck. Or coincidence. Or God's gentle, guiding hand.

"We made a link with Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre," recalls

Ruth Darling, chair of the church's CASE (Communications and Special Events) Committee "and that turned out to be the single mission that changed everything."

Tyndale, founded by Presbyterians in 1927 and long since joined by Anglican churches, is in the central Montreal district known as Little Burgundy, long an immigrants' landing zone. Generations ago it was the Irish and survivors of the underground railroad; today's newcomers arrive from Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean.

The link between the church and Tyndale was with Rosie Segee, a former banker who had changed career paths to develop adult programs at the centre. Rosie's sister provided care to Ruth's sister, and the two became friends. Montreal West soon created CASE and began lending a hand—cooking and caring at the centre's after-school and vocational training programs, and developing a series of annual events for the community, including BBQs, corn roasts, and such special celebrations as a Martin Luther King, Jr. service and jazz concert.

Sampson Afoakwah, the student minister from Presbyterian College, had been serving almost full-time for several months, a successful challenge

he credits, with a laugh, to his time-management skills. He was called to serve Montreal West and ordained in September 2014.

"When we host Tyndale at Montreal West, they tell us that they feel as if they're coming home," he reported. "It's a fine and effective outreach program of our church."

The young woman leading prayer was Jen de Combe, Tyndale's then-executive director. (De Combe recently said goodbye to Tyndale, taking a position as associate secretary for Canadian Ministries at the PCC's national offices in Toronto. Her successor at Tyndale is Liz Falko). Chatting with Montreal West Board Chair Howard Davidson, they agree on one thing.

"It's a friendship of equals," says Howard. "We complement each other very nicely. We've learned from each other about little things like public relations and larger things like erasing barriers between people."

Jen underlined the thought Christians have always understood.

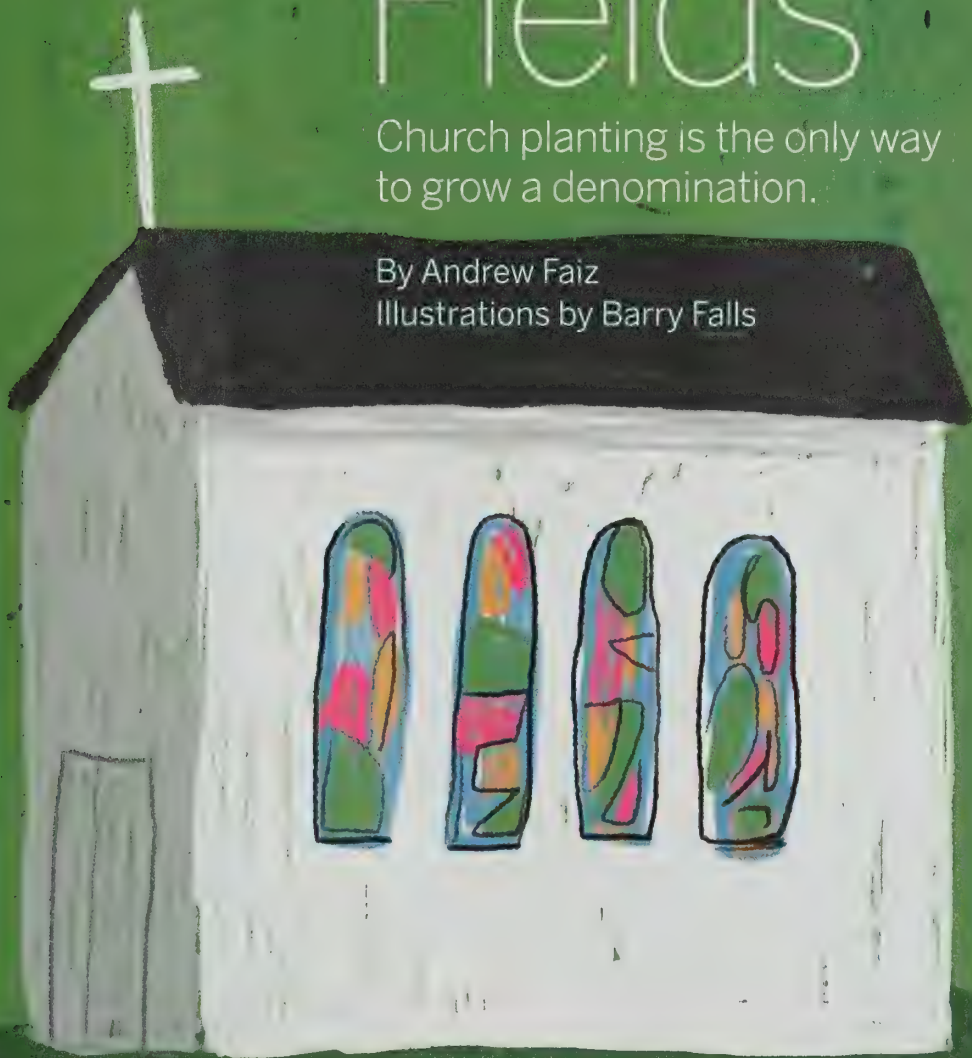
"This is what the living gospel looks like." ☕

Keith Randall is a Montreal-based writer and broadcaster, and an elder at the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal.

Green Fields

Church planting is the only way
to grow a denomination.

By Andrew Faiz
Illustrations by Barry Falls



Timothy Keller, the prolific author of books on church revitalization, gives this example in his talks: There are three towns with identical demographics, each with 100 churches.

In Town A the majority of churches are over 15 years old. The total number of members in those churches (the number of Christians in Town A) will steadily decline, even if there are a few growing congregations.

In Town B, five of the churches are under 15 years old; here the growth in the younger churches will merely offset the decline in the older churches.

In Town C, 30 per cent of the churches are 15 years of age or younger. Here the total Christian population will increase by 50 per cent in a generation.

What Keller is saying, not so subtly, is that the older the church, the less likely it is to grow in numbers and revitalize itself. Ouch!

And Keller is speaking of churches older than 15 years. Here in our little denomination we proudly celebrate anniversaries much older than that.

"Church planting is the single most effective way to revitalize a denomination." Martin Spoelstra makes that absolute declaration, without reserve or hesitation. Statistics prove, he says, that only one in a hundred churches will revitalize. We in the Presbyterian Church in Canada don't need the depth of statistical analysis; we need look no further than our lukewarm pond.

Spoelstra is church planter and co-pastor, along with his wife AJ, of Discovery Church in Bowmanville, Ont., and part of a church planting team for the Christian Reformed Church. He spoke last year at a conference sponsored by Canadian Ministries.

"To revitalize a church," he says, "and move it from its existing cultural context to something that is vibrant and growing is something that is very difficult to do. And often the better bang >



COVER STORY, continued

for the buck, so to say in the church planting world, is to start a new church.”

What he means and is too polite to say bluntly—though “cultural context” is telling code language—is the obvious: Congregations want change without changing; they want young members without making room for them. More than one clerical career has crashed against lazy and desperate congregational expectations. So, the best way to revitalize a church is to start from the beginning.

Spoelstra reminds us church planting was at the root of the PCC’s early growth—new churches in new communities for new Christians. Buildings were filled by mid-century. Then the planting efforts stopped, and now some of those churches celebrate their centenaries with empty pews. They have not been reborn.

It’s called church planting and the metaphors write themselves: You need a gardener, labourers, healthy soil, nurturing, guidance, good weather and much more.

Within the PCC there are very few people who fit the bill as gardener or even labourer. And as has been discussed many times within the PCC, our polity has lost its elasticity. While many turn in frustration to Canadian Ministries and other national offices, it is the presbyteries that control the empty buildings and have, in theory, the local knowledge. And, Spoelstra adds, church planters need to be evangelical and entrepreneurial. The PCC has not developed that person through its colleges. We need people who can till this particular soil.

Presbyterian College in Montreal is hoping

to reverse that trend. The smallest of our three seminaries, PC is developing church planting programming that will grow energetic entrepreneurs to go into the suburban wilderness to build a church from scratch.

The CRC has been doing this for a while. Martin Spoelstra has a commissioned pastor’s ordination, which allows him to serve as a minister to a called mission or congregation. Along with scriptural training, not as thorough as an MDiv would provide, he learned the skills needed to plant churches.

Whether the PCC will develop this sort of program only time will tell, but the need is there.

And it will need one more thing: Money. Operating budgets are shrinking, but at the same time denominations, like the PCC, have closed a lot of churches and collected a lot of cash. Debates rage within many presbyteries about what to do with those hundreds of thousands of dollars in the bank—to hold on to the

cash to delay briefly the coming end, or to risk it and create a possible future.

To circle back around, that means denominations need people who are trained to build missions and churches, find the new members, raise the funds, all the while preaching and teaching the gospels. In short, to both till the soil and nurture it.

REV. GRAHAM SINGH was born in a Guelph, Ont., hospital where his father and grandfather were doctors. He grew up in Presbyterian churches but it was in the United Kingdom that his life was turned around. Following a



different career path he got irreversibly side tracked by Holy Trinity Brompton, a Church of England institution most famous for developing and exporting the Alpha Course, an introduction to the Christian faith.

"I don't know whether the Lord found me or I found Him as an adult, but it was a real moment of experiencing faith through the Alpha Course, and being excited seeing new churches reopened," he says. First involved in Alpha, he later joined the church planting team at Holy Trinity Brompton.

Over 8,000 churches have closed in the U.K. since 1980. The HTB formula requires one energetic leader and several dozen members from thriving churches to move into one of the derelict buildings and start from the beginning.

"We found that people were travelling from quite far around cities to come to the large city centres like Holy Trinity Brompton. So, eventually, we said, 'Why don't you stop travelling for an hour to get to church? There are 50 of you coming to this church and there is an empty building in your neighbourhood. So, why don't we begin to train new clergy and send them out with you and we'll reopen that building in the same kind of style?'"

"In total, over the past 15 years or so, we saw about 45 churches like that reopened in the London area."

(Again, the PCC has plenty of near-empty churches, which need a trained gardener, and some eager labourers.)

A few years ago, Singh returned to his hometown to plant in a nearly empty United Church of Canada building. This year he moved to an Anglican church in Montreal. Along with planting churches he is also executive director of Church Planting Canada and a popular speaker. He teaches dying churches how to have hope.

"A denomination that has been present in a community is known as 'Christian presence.'"

I think that gives us an exciting opportunity. If we just say the Presbyterian Church in Canada is an extension of a Scottish type of worship into the Canadian nation, I don't think anybody would be convinced about the future of that. If we say the Presbyterian Church in Canada is an important presence of gospel in all kinds of communities, and we need to look to proclaim the gospel afresh in every generation; if we look and say, 'What could be done now with the assets of commu-

You need a gardener, labourers, healthy soil, nurturing, guidance, good weather and much more. Within the PCC there are very few people who fit the bill as gardener or even labourer

nity trust we have?" I think that's absolutely huge. We're facing green field opportunities."

This must be what entrepreneurial evangelism sounds like. The PCC could use a dose of that unbridled enthusiasm.

REVS. ALEX DOUGLAS AND DAVID MOODY were not looking to change their postings. But as they are the first to admit, "God initiated and dropped a vision on us."

That vision was to rebuild Heritage Green, a struggling church in Stoney Creek, Ont. They started to discuss this calling, working out how to plant a church within the church. (A profile of Heritage Green follows, and you can watch an interview with Douglas and Moody online.)

The congregation was seriously thinking about closing its doors. They were despondent and tired. Along came these two young ministers, filled with energy and enthusiasm.

Douglas met with each member of the congregation, one at a time. "It was a draining >

COVER STORY, continued

Unbridled Enthusiasm

More stories online.

THERE ARE STORIES that generate unbridled enthusiasm within the Canadian Presbyterian Church. Two of them—Heritage Green, Stoney Creek, and University, Windsor—are profiled in this issue. These are both remarkable stories; each has been edited to fit into the magazine. The full version is available online.

Also find online a rambling chat with Revs. Alex Douglas and David Moody of Heritage Green. Douglas felt a calling which at first seemed ridiculous—to plant a church within a congregation that had been struggling for decades and was thinking of closing its doors. Instead of selling or merging or downsizing or taking any one of the usual depressing options, Douglas wanted a two-minister (double the wages!) team to build a family ministry.

Presbytery and Canadian Ministries signed on to provide support and finances and two years on, the church is growing. The story isn't done yet; but Moody and Douglas have done the groundwork, with careful planning and a little bit of fumbling, to help the rest of the denomination find its way.

Back in 2012, before Heritage Green was a part of his life, David Moody did a study on Growing Churches Within the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Using data from the Acts and Proceedings he identified 36 congregations that had been growing at least five per cent over the previous three years. He then called them and asked them the secret to their success. (He was at Chippawa, Ont., then and didn't include his own church though it fit the bill.)

His survey identified missions within the church that made a difference. One, not surprisingly, has to do with leadership. Or as one person said, "There is nothing even close to being as important in our growth as [effective and visionary leadership]. This includes a lead pastor who is visionary in his approach, and a session which willingly engages in the discernment of God's will for the future."

Find the survey online. It is important reading.

Also find online a video interview Rev. Alex MacLeod (Kortright, Guelph) did with Rev. Graham Singh. These friends talk about Holy Trinity Brompton, the Alpha Course, church planting and the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Singh led the downtown Guelph Lakeside Church. In January this year, Singh left Guelph to become the incumbent of the Parish of St. James the Apostle, Montreal. He's doing it again—the church will be closed and reimagined as St. James Montreal later this year. This is the model he developed as a church planter in London—to close centrally located churches and re-open them. The soil is rich; it simply needs a gardener. —AF

**"If we look and say,
'What could be
done now with the
assets of community
trust we have?'
I think that's
absolutely huge"**

time; most people were like, "You know this isn't gonna work, right?"

The congregation, as it turns out, had community assets, a Presbyterian presence in the suburbs, a ripe field for planting, but they hadn't been able to tend that soil properly.

Moody and Douglas had no formal training as church planters. But they had a strong calling entrusted to them. They passed that on systemically and with patience to the original congregation, adding seed members from other congregations, and slowly attracting new members.

It was an act of faith. It took pastoral care and it took time and money, but most of all it took a strong sense of calling dropped on the ministers to then share with the other workers needed to plant and grow the church. +

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

Tilling and Seeding

Replanting Heritage Green. By Connie Wardle

HERITAGE GREEN, which sits in a suburban area southeast of Hamilton, Ont., began as a church plant and never quite got off the ground. It was founded more than a quarter-century ago under the leadership of a high-energy minister named Rev. Peter Walter. Then, just before the new building was complete, Walter died suddenly.

Jim Carroll and his family began attending when it was still a small congregation meeting in a nearby school, and served as chair of the building committee when the church was under construction. The congregation went into shock, Carroll remembers.

Presbytery stepped in to help but the church never quite recovered. Over the decades they had some years with a minister in the pulpit and many years without one. The long vacancies took their toll. The congregation wasn't growing, members were getting older and money was getting tighter.

"For years I've said to my wife, what's the formula?" said Carroll. "What's that magic formula that will make something successful here? And we wracked our brains and we couldn't come up with anything."

So the congregation decided to do what many struggling congregations do—they agreed to call a part-time minister and keep holding on as long as they could.

At about the same time, Rev. Alex Douglas felt a call from God during a personal retreat and began to put together a plan for an unapologetically family-focused church—a "replant"—at Heritage Green.

"When this church was planted here it was not planted here for other Christians," Douglas said. "It was planted here to reach the families who would be moving here as the houses were being built. We're still here and they're not building any more churches and so the mission is ours."

He ran his ideas past Rev. David Moody who he knew was better with logistical details. The two had become friends at seminary and they met regularly to pray together and talk shop. At that time Douglas was serving at a church about a 10-minute drive from Heritage Green. Moody was about an hour's drive east at a church in Chippawa, near Niagara Falls.

"The idea of two staff was a foundational piece," Douglas said, noting that planting a church required a wide range of gifts and lots of collegial support. It would also be a lot of work—way too much for a part-time minister, and probably enough to burn out a lone full-time minister.

When they made their presentation to the congregation, "we were asking them to >

COVER STORY, continued

do something new that had no funding yet," said Douglas. "Crazily they said yes."

The plan had three phases, all couched in the language of planting and growing. It began with the current congregation and a transparent, gradual process of preparation and change.

First there was the "tilling" phase. Douglas and Moody had already done a lot of work with the Futures Task Force, a committee born from concern about struggling, unsustainable congregations in the Presbytery of Hamilton.

Within a few months, the plan had the approval of presbytery and a chunk of the required funds. Presbytery kicked in \$30,000 for the first year (to be reduced by \$5,000 each year for a total of \$105,000 spread over six years), Canadian Ministries provided \$70,000 (to be reduced by \$5,000 to \$10,000 each year for a total of \$275,000), and Knox, Waterdown, chipped in \$10,000. Individuals also contributed through a website called Friends of Heritage Green.

The next phase was "seeding." Douglas and Moody began helping the congregation prepare for the changes ahead. They met the elders over a series of meals at their homes and at the church. They also started a Bible study for the session. Worship services gradually changed to a new family-focused format. They held a "clean sweep" day where members cleaned out the building to create a blank slate. (Among other things, they got rid of 10 boxes of books from book sales gone by and a seemingly endless supply of fake plants.) There were constant updates on what was

happening and what the next steps were. The congregation was encouraged to pray for the church and to meet together in small groups.

The church also needed more families with children if it was going to succeed. New families with kids need to be able to meet other families with kids. So they sought "seed families"

People continue to invite people. The congregation reaches out intentionally to the community

who would commit to attend and participate in the life of Heritage Green for a period of time.

It means sacrifices by other churches and by the families who would be leaving their faith communities for a while. To help, Heritage Green hosted some "come and see" events on Saturdays. Potential seed families were able to experience Heritage Green without having to miss Sunday services at their own churches.

Originally, Douglas and Moody also thought they'd need to get some space back from a daycare that rents a large section of the church building. But they realized the daycare provides a great point of connection to kids and parents—people who visit the church multiple times a week but would never think of coming for a service on a Sunday. Instead of fighting

them, why not invite them?

They began building relationships with the daycare staff. Douglas started leading story time a few times a week. Near Christmas they held an evening event with lots of activities for kids. It brought in about 150 people—most of them from the daycare.

The final phase was "spreading." Once the current congregation (the soil) and the seed families were ready, promotion began. People continue to invite people. The congregation reaches out intentionally to the community.

The ministry launched faster than anyone had anticipated. It was less than a year from the time the idea was floated at presbytery to the day Douglas and Moody were appointed to the church as missionaries. In the Presbyterian system, that's practically light speed.

"If you know David and Alex like I do, how can you not be positive about people like that?" said elder Jim Carroll. "They're good, quality people, they have faith coming out their wazoo and they really want to be successful."

The Family Church of Heritage Green is still an experiment. It's still a young thing with an uncertain future. But the excitement for the project is palpable.

"We're kind of in the middle right now," said Carroll. "You don't know where you're going, and some people don't like that. But I like that: the challenge of the unknown. And you just simply embrace it. Here's where we might be going; let's see where we go." +

Connie Wardle is the Record's senior writer.

A Rejuvenation

The story of a youth-centred community church in Windsor.

By Connie Wardle



WHEN REV. MARY TEMPLER was appointed interim moderator of Knox in Windsor, Ont., she was prepared to deal with a lot of disappointment.

The congregation had dwindled to a few devoted, elderly members. Over the years they had tried in different ways to reach out to the students living and studying across the street at the University of Windsor, but nothing seemed to work. The congregation

shrank as members passed away.

Fred Plexman, who was the clerk of session, remembers it as a very stressful time. Some members wanted to keep the congregation going and others wanted to close the church. It wasn't like the congregation was going bankrupt. There were hundreds of thousands of dollars in the bank.

"We have all this money, and we have no people," Plexman recalled. "What's that good for? To carry on and just... it bothered me."

"They were very disillusioned, and there was lots of infighting about what they thought should happen," Templer said. "We had a lot of depressing meetings."

The final service "was very sad," remembered Anne Plexman, Fred's wife. Those who disagreed with the decision to close the church didn't come, and it ended with a note of bitterness.

It took a long while for the Presbytery of Essex-Kent to work out a plan. In the end they decided to try and plant a new church in the old Knox building. Templer was one of several ministers who applied to lead it.

Anne said Fred was instrumental pressing for Mary to become the founding minister >

COVER STORY, continued

of University Community Church. "She seemed to have the right ability at the time," Anne said. "That was a bit of a battle but he won them over as I recall. And as Mary said she went into that with much trepidation and fear, but she did a wonderful job."

"When I started there wasn't a single person here," Templer said. "I just got the keys to a building that had been empty for months and months."

So she started putting together a team. She thought about leaders in Windsor's Christian community—not just Presbyterians, but people of different denominational stripes—who might be interested in starting a new church geared toward university students. She pulled together about 10 people, mostly Baptists, Anglicans and Pentecostals.

They didn't begin by launching something new. They began by loitering and listening. They asked students around campus what they would want to find if they came to a church. Most said they'd never be interested in coming to church—but hypothetically, if they did, they would only be interested in God, not in traditional trappings or religious institutions. So the leadership team decided they would talk a lot about how awesome God is. They held their first service in September of 2001.

Planting and growing a church geared toward university students proved to be quite different from serving a more traditional Presbyterian congregation.

The worship services were designed for people who had no idea what a worship service was. The music was all new, played by a band of university students. The sermons

were interactive, with back-and-forth discussions. And students were very involved as leaders.

"In 10 years I have never had a Sunday without at least one person there who openly says they're not a Christian," said Templer, who retired from ministry a few years ago, passing

**They didn't begin
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on the reins of a congregation made up mostly of unchurched twentysomethings. "In some ways it's fun and challenging but also exhausting.

"I remember [at other churches in the past] when we could just have communion without explaining what it is. Every communion at UCC I had to explain it or I would be flooded with students the next week. It raises so many questions like 'I didn't realize Christians were cannibals.' For someone who has never taken communion before, the whole thing can be very bizarre."


The church had other unique challenges. For years they tried to hold an evening service but it just didn't work; the leadership team could never figure out why. An attempt to open a restaurant in the basement was a disaster. They held Alpha Courses where they had "no people being converted to Christianity, but Christians converted to other religions," Templer said.

But they learned some lessons and tried again. Today there's a successful fair trade café in the church basement that's open all week. And the Alpha Courses proved successful when they were held at a local pub instead of in the church.

There are some challenges the church will probably never be able to overcome. A chunk of its student leaders graduate and leave each year. And often, former attendees don't like the monologue format of traditional church services. They miss being able to ask questions in the middle of the sermon, or opportunities to be on a leadership team. Some of them stop attending a church after university.

Yet those in leadership at UCC do what they can, planting seeds they hope will grow into rugged faith. They try to introduce people to Christ in the hope they will really sit down to get to know him. It's a church of beginnings.

The church's whole story is one of death and resurrection—new life growing from old, fertile ground.

Or, as Anne Plexman said, "a rejuvenation." 

Connie Wardle is the Record's senior writer.

FROM THE MODERATOR

Listening and Learning

A long journey to healing. By Karen Horst

It is like speaking the truth with your right hand on the Bible when you hold the feather. In a round circle at Kenora Fellowship Centre, Marvin shared his challenges. He humbly declared that he has not yet healed enough to make his drum. He told the story of the day, that at the age of 13 he actually escaped the residential school he was forced to attend. He managed to get home after three days of sleeping and hiding outdoors. He was fortunate to survive. Marvin got one night with his parents. In the morning, the police returned him to the school.

Glenn, a gifted artist, held the feather next. He shared his deep longing and grief regarding the family he never really had since he lost many of them to the long-term effects of residential schools. Elder Tommy shared his encouragement to those struggling with addictions and told his story of conquering the same. The journey of reconciliation will take time. There is also heartache for the residential school teachers who were not abusive. They too have suffered in the growing awareness of the harm done in the residential school initiative that began in the 1800s. The last residential school in Canada closed in 1996.

What was fundamentally wrong about the schools was the philosophy of our government—and supported by churches—to “assimilate” aboriginal people into the mainstream of the dominant culture. Terrible damage was committed to ongoing generations



The journey of reconciliation will take time. There is also heartache for the residential school teachers who were not abusive

of survivors who were stripped of their roots and culture. Our denomination formally apologized in 1994 for our participation, and over the past six years, we have been involved in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process that culminated in 94 Calls to Action (trc.ca) presented on June 2, 2015 in Ottawa.

It was my great honour to be present for the final ceremony in Ottawa of the TRC on Dec. 15, 2015. I addressed the commission, survivors, Prime Minister Trudeau, the general crowd in attendance and Canadians watching on television about our resolve to carve out a new partnership based on mutual respect. We committed to “continue

to hear and study the truth, to combat the ongoing effects of colonialism and to advocate for justice in those areas of Canadian society where the gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous remain far too wide: education, safety for women, clean water, access to health care, reasonably priced food, land and housing.”

I have since been a part of a number of discussions regarding how the Presbyterian Church may continue this process in a way that is meaningful and lasting. I am excited that our apology is not just on paper but that our denomination is seeking to actualize it with considerable consultation and partnership with aboriginal people. Our churches already have significant local ministries supported by Canadian Ministries (which can offer support thanks to Presbyterians Sharing). Be sure to visit presbyterian.ca for the comprehensive list.

It falls to all of us as Christians to recover relationships, listen carefully to the stories that have still not been told and not make the mistakes of the past as we seek to respect our brothers and sisters. There is much to be done and it will take time, but I am filled with hope that forgiveness and reconciliation is possible. Jesus calls all of us to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. We are still on a journey in learning the appropriate ways to do so. 🍓

Rev. Karen Horst is minister at St. Andrew's, Orillia, Ont.

People & Places

Find more online at presbyterianrecord.ca

Photographs can be uploaded at presbyterianrecord.ca.



ST. ANDREW'S, OTTAWA

Over the course of 2015, the kids in the St. Andrew's Sunday school raised over \$2,000 through their weekly offerings. That money will be going to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to help support Syrian refugees.



PROJECT PLOUGHSHARES, WATERLOO, ONT.

Philip MacFie is the 2015-2016 peace and security intern at Project Ploughshares. He grew up in Parkwood Presbyterian in Ottawa and said he really got thinking about mission and social justice when he helped out with a peace camp for youth in the presbytery. "It challenged me to look at social issues from a Christian perspective and think about what I might do," he said. The peace and security internship is funded by undesignated bequests to the Presbyterian Church. MacFie will be the last intern appointed under the current program.



MISSISSAUGA CHINESE, MISSISSAUGA, ONT.

Oct. 31, 2015 wasn't just Halloween—it was training time for elders at Mississauga Chinese. Pictured here at an elders' workshop are, in the back row: Rev. Hugo King-Wah Lau (senior minister), Stanley Chu (elder), Rev. Don Muir (deputy clerk of the General Assembly and the workshop leader), and Carmen Hung (elder); sitting in front are: Rev. Susie Soo-Yeon Choi (English ministry leader), and Tina Yung (elder).

THE OTHER SIX DAYS

God Stuff

Music, memes and ministry. By Bradley Childs

GREAT MUSIC

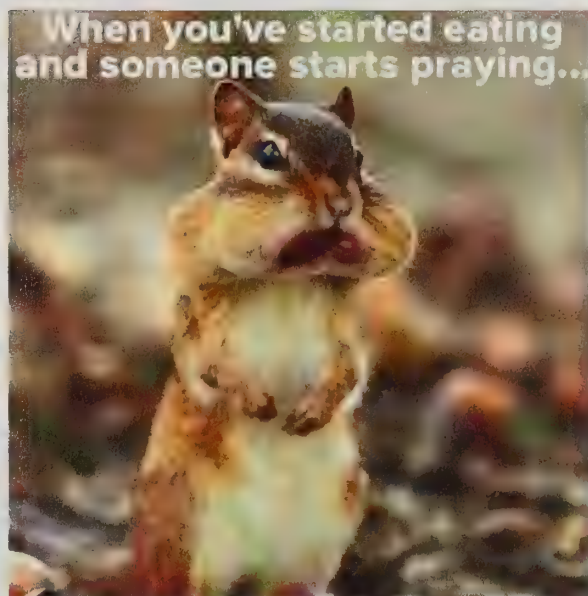
Because the *Presbyterian Record* wisely determined that my original entry about pin-up models selling caskets would lead people to actually look up racy pictures of scantily clad (or unclad) ladies selling caskets, and because the links to that particular piece were “NSFW” and not “family-friendly,” I’ve decided to write about a little-known band instead.

Straight out of the mean/hard streets of small town Idaho come three brothers and a childhood friend calling themselves The Ongoing Concept. Together they have put out four albums in just five years. And I can’t wait to see what they’ve got for us next because...well...the youngest one just graduated high school. So let the touring begin! Unfortunately they don’t have any plans to visit my part of the world any time soon but rest assured I’d go if they came even remotely close. I think it’s fair to call them Christian-Punk-Metal; though there are even some 1910s Fats Waller-like rhythms in there. You sort of have to hear it, I guess. Check out the song, “Unwanted” to get a good taste.

FIND IT @ [YouTube.com](#). Search for “The Ongoing Concept.”

MORE MUSIC

Jordan Feliz was previously with a band



[presbyterianmemes.com](#)

for about 10 years but with little success. Recently Jordan struck out on his own. His solo album *Beloved* was released in October 2015. And it’s great. The music is what I guess you might call folk-pop or some other similar hybrid but it’s nothing short of genius. In particular the song “The River” is well worth a listen. Give this California Christian hipster a chance. You won’t regret it.

FIND IT @ [jordanfeliz.com](#) and [YouTube.com](#).

GOD STUFF

Many years ago when I first began watching *The Daily Show* (then with Craig Kilborn) there used to be a segment called “The Best of God Stuff.” The bit was done by writer and comedian John

Bloom who had developed a program for the *Wittenburg Door*. As his alter ego Joe Bob Briggs, Bloom would scour Christian television looking for moments of pure insanity to show the world. Well as luck would have it, now all nine full-length episodes of “GodStuff” are available on YouTube for your viewing pleasure. Watch televangelists explain how Jesus was really rich or how sin causes acne. See Benny Hinn put curses on people or Robert Tilton heal someone with diarrhea!

FIND IT @ [YouTube.com](#). Search for “Godstuff.”

MEMES

Presbyterian memes! What could be better? You know memes. They’re those images paired with witty, humorous or inspiring words that have become so popular on social media. The good folks over at Presbyterian Memes have all the best ones. Describing them here won’t do them justice so you will have to check them out yourself. Hey, spice up your Facebook page with a few gems. The more people letting the world know that Presbyterians don’t have steel in their veins, the better.

FIND IT @ [presbyterianmemes.com](#).

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.

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Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Beaconsfield, Que., Briarwood; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries; 514-288-5256 ext. 209; rdevries@presbyteriancollege.ca; profile at briarwoodpc.wordpress.com.

Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

Ashburn, Burns; Interim Moderator Rev. Andrew Allison, PO Box 104, Leaskdale ON L0C 1C0; 905-852-5921; a.allison@saintpauls.ca.

Guelph, Duff's; seeking a forward-thinking full-time minister to provide strong leadership, preach to the practicalities and encourage new forms of worship, music and ministry; Interim Moderator

Rev. Bill Bynum, c/o Duff's Presbyterian Church, 319 Brock St. S., Guelph ON N1H 6H9; congregation's profile available on church's website, the Ministry & Church Vocations website and from the Interim Moderator.

Palmerston, Knox; Full-time new grad or 3/4 time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Kathy Morden, PO Box 8, Neustadt ON N0G 2M0; 519-321-1942; kcpc-revkathy@wightman.ca.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Ancaster, St. Andrew's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Anne Yee-Hibbs; 35 Giffin Rd., Dundas, ON L9N 7N5; 905-627-9080; ayhibbs@gmail.com.

Bayfield, Knox; Part-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. John Henderson, PO Box 824, Exeter, ON N0M 1S6; 519-235-2608; henderson.johncharles@gmail.com.

Fingal, Knox; Half-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Ed Hoekstra, 970 Oxford St. W., London, ON N6H 1V4;

519-471-2290 extension 222;

ehoekstra@oakridge.london.on.ca.

Ingersoll, St. Paul's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Mark McLennan, 59 Riddell St., Woodstock, ON N4S 6M2; 519-537-2962; roundrev@rogers.com.

Mooretown, St. Andrew's and Moore, Knox; Full-time ministry in a rural two-point charge; Interim Moderator Rev. Shirley F. Murdock; 914-1275 Sandy Lane, Sarnia, ON N7V 4H5; 519-491-9892; sfm.rev@gmail.com.

Port Dover, Knox; Part-time minister, 60%; Interim Moderator Rev. Bob Sim, 145 Hawkswood Trail, Hamilton ON L9B 2R5; 905-921-5667; revbobsim@gmail.com.

Windsor, Paulin Memorial; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Scott McAllister, c/o University Community Church, 2320 Wynadotte St. W., Windsor ON N9B 1K4; 519-253-8741.

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FOR THE JOURNEY

A Canadian Love Story

David Thompson and Charlotte Small traversed the wilderness together.

By David Webber



ONE OF MY FAVOURITE places in all the world is the Rocky Mountain Trench in the East Kootenay region of B.C. Linda and I grew up and lived there until we fell in love and were married 45 years ago. One of the most beautiful places in the Rocky Mountain Trench is Lake Windermere.

Recently, as I was listening to Roy MacGregor being interviewed on CBC Radio about his book *Canoe Country: The Making of Canada*, I was reminded of this place and one of the great Canadian love stories that is commemorated there.

On the northwestern shore of Lake Windermere is the village of Invermere, formally known in the days of the fur trade as Kootenay House. In Invermere there is a very unique statue. It is a likeness of David Thompson (1770-1857), one of the most underappreciated but arguably one of the most important early explorers of Canada. There are not many statues to David Thompson in this country (notwithstanding the one at Lac la Biche). What makes it even more unique is that standing beside him is a statue of his wife, Charlotte Small. Of all the statuary of the famous early indigenous chiefs, white explorers and other founders of Canada, apparently there is only one that includes the spouse, adding doubly to the statue's uniqueness. But to my mind, what makes this statue even more inimitable is the love story that it represents.

Charlotte Small was an indigenous woman of Cree and Scottish ancestry. When just five years old, Charlotte, her two

siblings and her Cree mother were abandoned by her fur-trading Scottish father when he returned to England. She was raised as a Cree woman by her mother. She met and married David Thompson on June 10, 1779 at Île-à-la-Crosse in what is now northern Saskatchewan, according to the customs of the Cree people. He was 29 and she was only 13 years old. Theirs is a love story that is unique and touching in Canadian history. At a time when the commonly accepted practice for white fur traders and explorers was to abandon their indigenous "country wives" just

as soon as they could make their way back to civilization, from the very beginning David and Charlotte were smitten with love and totally committed to one another for life.

David Thompson often referred to Charlotte as his "lovely wife" and "his great advantage" in his detailed journals. This tiny, wiry, black-eyed indigenous woman, barely one-and-a-half metres tall, accompanied him on many of his rugged exploring and map-making journeys with children and babies in tow. She wintered with him in many of the rudimentary western trading posts that he established. She climbed the rugged Rocky Mountain passes, paddled the perilous river waters and rode the dangerous mountain trails through Canada's western wilderness with him. From the turn of the century until 1812, Charlotte and David travelled more than 20,000 kilometres together, exploring and mapping much of western Canada. She was the translator of indigenous languages and customs ➤

Final Thoughts

FOR THE JOURNEY, continued

for him. She was often the difference between life and death as she used her many wilderness survival skills to care for and feed him in the wild. She bore him five children in the frontier and later moved with him to Montreal where she was baptized in St. Gabriel Street Presbyterian Church together with the children. Over time, this devout couple had eight more children for a total of 13.

Charlotte was always David Thompson's strongest advocate through his varied and exceptional career, even when they fell on extremely hard times. When he died on the 10th of February in 1887 in Montreal, broken, penniless and underappreciated, without any recognition at the age of 87, Charlotte his love was still by his side. And when he was laid to rest in Mount Royal Cemetery she threw herself on his grave and remained there through the whole winter's night. She died three months later on May 4th at the age of 71 and was interred beside him. Their marriage lasted 58 years, apparently the longest union in the Canadas up to that time and one that helped define a nation. Charlotte's life's story in the wilderness with David Thompson is fascinatingly told by Leanne Playter in *Moccasin Miles: The Travels of Charlotte Small, 1799-1812*. (See experiencemountainparks.com/charlotte-small-woman-of-historic-significance.)

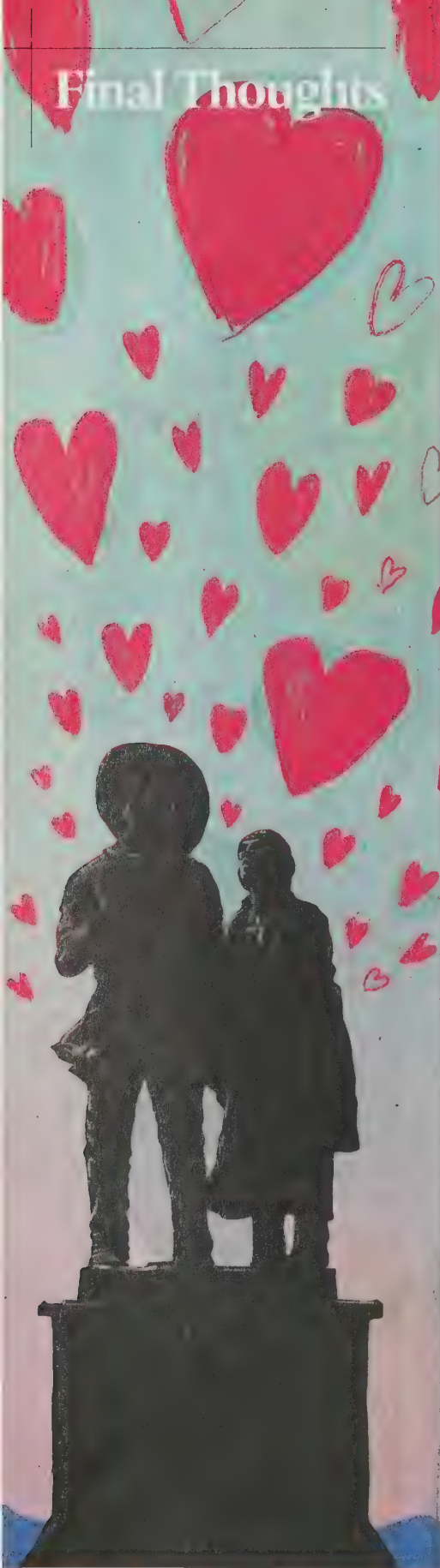
It's February, the month of valentines and love stories, stories that I am always a sucker for. It's not just that I am a hopeless romantic, and I am certainly that, but it is the commitment in these love stories that intrigues me. At one point whilst crossing Howse Pass in the Rockies in 1807, Thompson wrote in his journal: "The water descending in innumerable Rills, soon swelled our Brook to a Rivulet, with a Current foaming white, the Horses with

Difficulty crossed & recrossed at every two or 300 yards, & the Men crossed by clinging to the Tails & Manes of the Horses, & yet ran no small danger of being swept away & drowned." What Thompson does not write is that Charlotte is part of that expedition making these same perilous river crossings—and she has three infant children under her wing. If that is not enough to knock the shine off any romance I don't know what is. But Charlotte stuck to him like glue, and he to her. That's what intrigues me—love that sticks, love like a hacking cough, love that gets a hold and will never let go.

When I think about God's love for me, that is the kind of love I think of. In the Bible, God's love for His people is often described like this. One of my favourite examples is from Isaiah. The prophet contemplates the defeated and desolate Zion questioning the love of God, feeling forgotten and forsaken by God. God speaks to Zion through the prophet saying, "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me" (Isaiah 49:15-16).

When I think of Jesus the Christ, I think of God's love for me like that, love that is engraved in the palm of the hand, a persistent nail-scarred tattoo. It reminds me that in the greatest love story ever told, the love story that is God and me, God's love is written in blood. It is love that will never let go. +

Rev. David Webber, now retired, was the founding missionary in the unique Cariboo ministry in Central B.C. The most recent of his four books, When the Aspen Flowers, can be ordered through webberink@telus.net.



In A Valley

By Laura Laird

Bitter winds wail
Panels rattle and wheeze
Dark hearth sits silent.

Stinging cold metal
Shakes ash free
Embers glow

Dry bones ache to assemble
Suffice for another day.
Kneel. Breathe.

*Feb. 25, 2015
(Ezekiel 37, Psalm 23)*

Does your congregation need help using technology?

Read our latest new blog, Web, Tech & Worship, written by Wayne Sankarai.

Presbyterian Record is pleased to have a new structure for our technology column. We will continue to have a monthly column, but we will also have a weekly column, Web, Tech & Worship, written by Wayne Sankarai.

Wayne Sankarai is a pastor.

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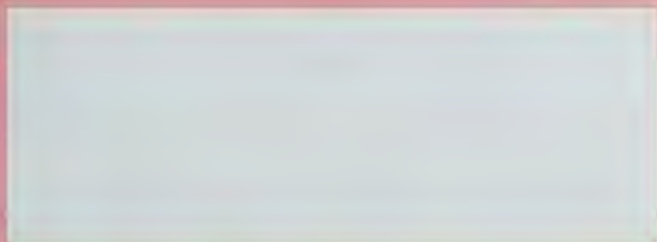
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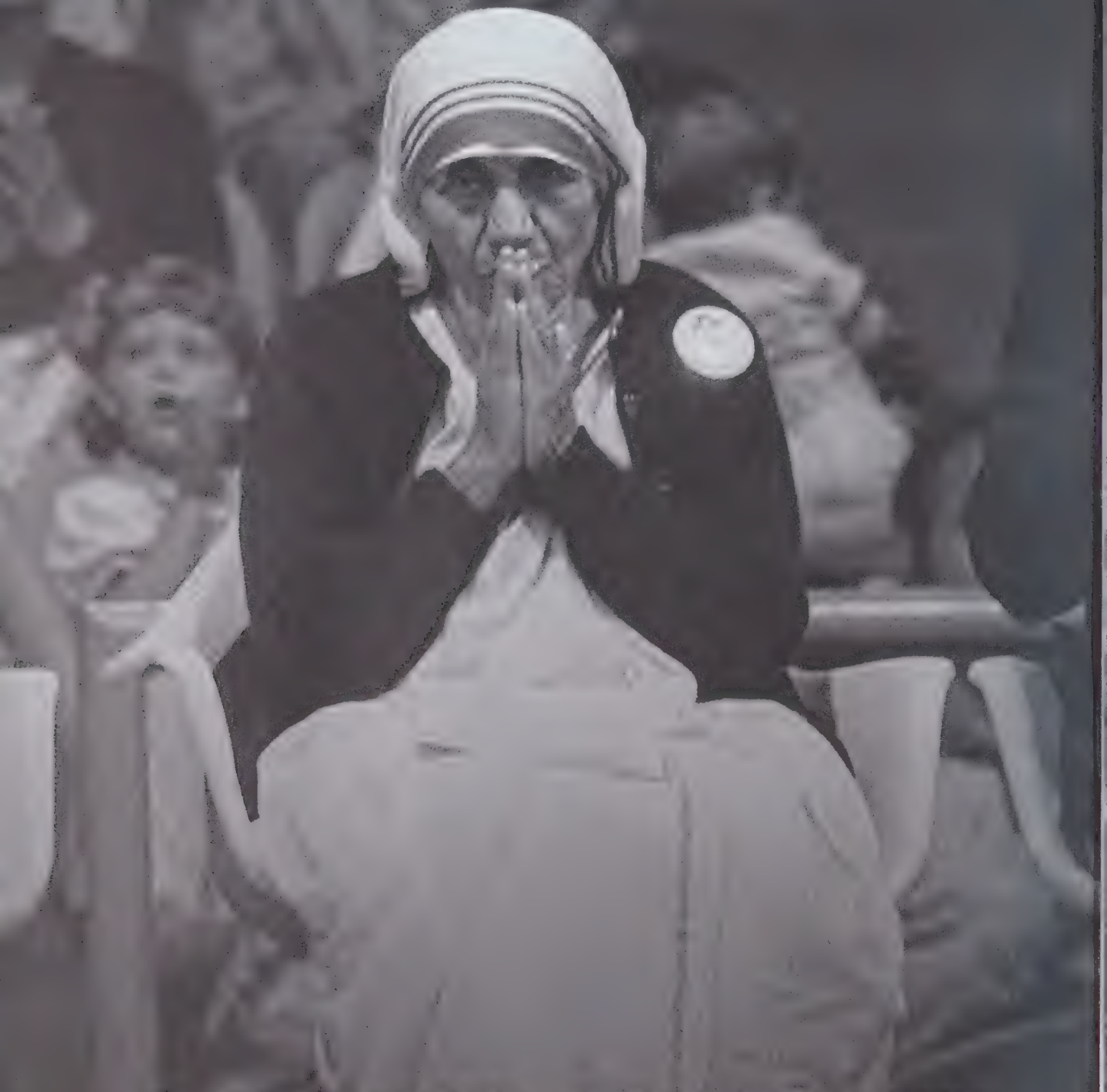
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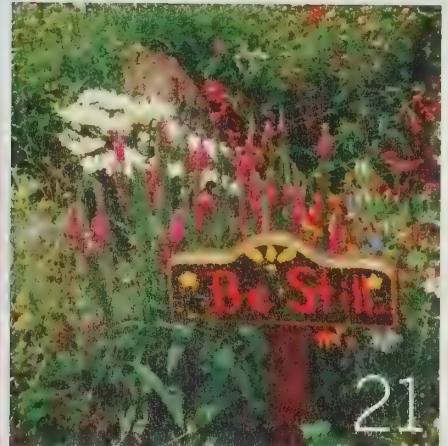


"I am not sure exactly what heaven will be like, but I know that when we die and it comes time for God to judge us, he will not ask, 'How many good things have you done in your life?' rather he will ask, 'How much love did you put into what you did?'"

—Mother Teresa

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Christians can't hope to interpret scripture without the Spirit nor can they conveniently ignore what is in scripture

FOR THE RECORD

Give it to God

We can't make good decisions when we're angry. *by* DAVID HARRIS

What do you do when you are wrestling with a big problem and you feel overwhelmed with anger and frustration either from your inability to resolve the issue or because others can't see it the way you see it so very clearly?

For many people in the church, that's how they feel about the current discussion on same-sex relationships. And no wonder. Sexuality and sexual identity go to the heart of who we are as human beings. So they involve powerful emotions.

The Bible has remarkably little to say about sexuality. Of the few passages that touch on the subject, it's clear, as the theme of this issue shows, that none is friendly towards anything same-sex.

Of course it's also clear we don't fully understand what most of those passages really mean. Otherwise, we wouldn't even be debating the matter.

And here's where things break down for many. One side believes themselves to be true to what little is in scripture about sexual relationships. The other side says they are being true to the Spirit in the way they read scripture more widely.

But surely this is a false opposition. Christians can't hope to interpret scripture without the Spirit nor can they conveniently ignore what is in scripture.

In fact, we do not merely read scripture in seeking God's will but we pray scripture. Merely reading scripture was one of the temptations Jesus faced in the desert. His response, albeit scriptural, came from

his deep praying over God's word.

So what to do with those raw emotions roiling under the surface? Maybe they are roiling now because we haven't said this way or that way is the right way. (We're not going to.)


But take those emotions and hand them over to God. That's all. Hand that worry—hand that anger, that fear that the church will change or the fear that it won't—just hand it all over in prayer.

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace," is how Jesus puts it in Eugene Peterson's *The Message*.

We cannot make good decisions when we are crippled by fear and anger. Any parent knows that. We can only make good decisions when we are calm. When we truly believe God is in control.

And whatever happens, now or later, God will still be in control.

As we—the church—make our way through this issue, I invite you to read the articles in the magazine, to engage in the fuller documents and videos on our website, and then, to be still.

Put it all aside, and ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and guide you. 

David Harris is the Record's publisher and editor.

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First Thoughts

Letters



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God Calls Men?

Re The Gender Imbalance, January

Why are only a quarter of our ministers female? It's a fair question, but this should be addressed to God Himself. Are not all ministers called by God to the congregation?

The initial question shows a bias, by using the word "only." Why should they be in the same proportion? It is God who does the calling. Women and men are already equal in our church; if not, in any given congregation, then this needs to be identified and addressed. But it serves no purpose for us to assume that the minister calls should be proportional to the ratio of the gender of the candidates. This is up to God.

DON MACMILLAN, OTTAWA

The Minister's Wife

Re There is Always Room at the Top, January

I enjoyed reading this article but noticed the omission of what Joyce Davis might have called a fourth category for women "called" to a life of service. Today, they would be referred to as the "minister's spouse" although colloquially, and, before the ordination of women, they were known as the "minister's wife." This group, through marriage, entered a category for which no one prepared them. They entered with no knowledge of the expectations, little knowledge of the politics of the life in the manse, no preparation for the jolt of significant budgetary restrictions, and no understanding of the loneliness brought on >

First Thoughts

LETTERS, continued

by being a stranger in a strange land. For many, all of this was taking place as they were beginning their families. The fact that any marriages stayed together and both parties stayed sane throughout it all is a miracle in itself.

Some have spoken of how far women have come in the work of the church. I can echo that but until the minister's spouse is recognized as being an important and integral part of the team, whether or not both members are ordained, there will still be more to do. It is a role, unlike any other member of the congregation, for which one is relied upon but for which one is untrained. A ministerial association with partners included might be a way for people living it to support each other.

ANONYMOUS, ONLINE

Can She Drive?

Re A Real Minister, January

Thank you Dr. Cocks, for your way of writing about the last 50 years.

I have been afforded many wonderful opportunities to see change, thankfully, for the most part. There are moments to become upset but occasions have always given me quiet conversations with God in hope to find ways around/

through/over/under stumbling blocks and to confront the feelings, as they are real. But I do hope God has laughed alongside women in the moments we have laughed because without that, what are we to do?

Thank God we are never alone; Christ and Spirit are forever present and there are sisters and brothers who serve in all corners ready to lend a word of peace or hope of gentle (and sometimes of sledgehammer type as well) correction. I thank the late Rev. Lockie Royal. Without a hint of any male/female issue, nor that of age, he protected and supported me from any words of injustice that may have stopped me from the time of my earliest youth leadership roles to my time at Ewart College and beyond. I only ever knew a tremendously supportive session and minister.

There's one memory I remember, not because I was present but because of how deeply I talked to God in response. It brought to me the striking reality that the nerve crunching, prayerful, spiritual event of the life of my first call had to be held in the hands of God. There simply is no other way to conceive of it when you hear how it was perceived by others on

that day in 1999. As the search committee presented my name for consideration they were asked not questions of my theological stance or depth of education or experience I had, but if I had a driver's license and could I drive? Because it wouldn't do to "have to have one of us drive her around all the time," which was followed shortly by, "Will we have to buy her lipstick?" One has to smile.

JULIA MORDEN, ONLINE

Debating Decline

Re Injecting Enthusiasm, February

I note February's editorial mentions "the decline now being felt among Evangelicals." I'd be interested in knowing what evidence it's based on. New evidence is always useful. The statement seems to conflict with the recent work of Dr. Reg Bibby, who sees Catholics and Evangelicals in a different place than Mainliners.

There are various factors in a denomination's growth or decline. For about 90 years the Presbyterian Church in Canada has likely blamed the United Church, yet the PCC's decline has continued.

Demographics/theology? The relationship is complicated. Within

Pastor Shep



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demographics, looking at why the church has been transformed by society is a needed piece; and the role of theology is more complex than dismissing concerns about “so called liberal theology.”

TERRY M. SMITH, MITCHELL, MAN.

More Love Needed

Re The Wide Boulevard, February

“It is to weep!” I don’t think I have ever quoted that phrase before, but when reading the latest issue of the *Record* it sprang to mind as I discovered the vitriol that was in the excerpts from letters to the editor concerning an article in the December issue. Wow! No love there!

Having read the statistics quoted by David Harris before I saw those letters I began to think that perhaps there was a correlation. Have young people stopped going to church because they don’t think they need God in their lives, or have they grown up in congregations where only certain opinions could be expressed and no enthusiasm for new ideas could be tolerated?

The article by Jonathan Scott was not part of a campaign. The election was over. Like it or not he was speaking

about our now Prime Minister who had dared to mention a chapter of the Bible as a good thing. Speaking as someone over 80 I realize we can’t expect all “sunny days” ahead but we should rejoice that we still have younger people like Jonathan in the church thinking positively instead of looking for the worst in people.

Perhaps those letter writers should concentrate on Jesus’ message in Luke 6, or at least read the message by Rev. Fred Stewart in the February *Record*.

By the way, thank you, Andrew Faiz, for your response to the letters. And I did enjoy the articles that month about new ways of doing church. More love there.

JOAN HILLIARD, RENFREW, ONT.

Thank you, Andrew! As you know, I am the mother of the 25-year-old student or “liberal hack/flack” who wrote the “smarmy piece” in question. It certainly does hurt to read such comments. I appreciate your defense of many views for the whole church. We have a wide variety of views in our own home too, reflecting that it doesn’t take much common courtesy to get along in civil society.

I’m thankful that my son was raised to have an inquisitive mind, a loving heart and to serve Jesus.

KELLY SCOTT, ONLINE

CORRECTION

The photos in Jon Helm’s “Reaching Out Through Music” story in the February issue should have been credited to Megan Kelsey Photography. We apologize for the error.

ONLINE EXTRA

Let the conversation continue at presbyterianrecord.ca. ☪



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POP CHRISTIANITY

A Little Guarded

Three stories about church. *by* **ANDREW FAIZ**

It was 10:20 a.m. I was in a little early. In the pew in front of me were a young couple I had not seen in church before. They seemed uncertain. He had his own Bible.

There was the usual confusion before worship starts; the last-minute sound checks, the quick choir rehearsal, the greetings, the sotto voce conversations.

I did what I should have done when I first sat down. I said hello to them. They had just moved to the western part of town, to the apartment building across the street. They were both from small town Ontario, and had been living and worshipping in the eastern part of town the past few years. When she got a new job at a school in the west end, they decided to be closer to both their workplaces. They had moved in the night before; they had never been to a Presbyterian church. They seemed pleasant, if a little guarded.

Two stalwart members walked by and one said to the other, "I think I'll sit beside you today, somebody's sitting in my pew." I could see the couples' shoulders tense.

Just as worship was about to start, as the buzz silenced itself, they excused themselves and left. I haven't seen them since.

I don't blame them of course; they were sitting in the old gal's pew and they knew they could not ever be forgiven for that sin. No point hanging around for the inevitable shame.



How dare I make those people feel uncomfortable, a dark skinned bum intruding on their perfect self-supporting community?

I WAS CAMPING with the family and I decided to go to church. After a quick scan on my phone I found a Presbyterian worship about 30 kilometres away. I had just enough time.

It was summer; I was camping. I hadn't shaved in a few days; I was in shorts and sandals. I drove as quickly as I dared, and managed to catch most but not all of the vaguely marked rural roads.

I was a few minutes late; the first hymn was a few verses along.

Nobody acknowledged me. I found the bulletin and the hymnbook and Bible. I sat in the back pew of the small church. Throughout the worship, folks, old enough to be my parents or older, kept looking back at me. No one ever smiled at me.

I should have left, found a coffee shop, got a paper. How dare I make those people feel uncomfortable, a dark skinned bum intruding on their perfect self-supporting community?

I now rarely go to church while on vacation; I can't take the rejection.

I'VE KNOWN HER FOR YEARS; she's a very good actor. We're in a pub after a weekly workshop. She's got a glass of wine; I've got a pint. She's aghast I go to church. "You believe in God, and all that stuff?" I assure her I do. All that stuff.

She's quiet a moment. "I guess I believe in God," she says. "Not that old guy, white beard, sitting on a cloud stuff; that's kinda stupid. But I believe in something. Not like a higher power, kind of thing, that's kinda paternalistic, I think, but something. Like God.

"Like God. I like God." She laughs at her own wordplay. "Yeah. I like God."

Then with a conspiratorial dropping of her voice, she leans forward and says, "But I hate church." +

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

BULLETIN

Community and World News



VIEWPOINT

‘We Need to Stay Awake’

La Loche tragedy signals a call for action.

by AMANDA CURRIE

La Loche, Saskatchewan is located about 600 km northwest of Saskatoon, where I have lived for the last 12 years. Before the tragic shooting that took place in the town of about 3,000 people on Jan. 22, I knew very little about La Loche. I knew it was “up north” and usually pretty cold in the provincial weather reports. Like many people in Saskatchewan and most people in Canada, I was not aware of the problems and challenges with which the people of La Loche were living.

In the aftermath of this tragedy, I learned that about 90 >

VIEWPOINT, continued

per cent of the residents of La Loche self-identify as Aboriginal, unemployment is about 22.3 per cent, and about 38 per cent of homes are deemed unsuitable by the National Occupancy Standard.

Although it took a horrific shooting, in which a troubled young man killed four people and seriously injured seven more, for most of us to start paying attention to La Loche, this was certainly not the first time that the community's needs had been in the news. In 2008, nine La Loche youth killed themselves. The town has the highest rate of suicide in the province—43.4 suicide deaths per 100,000 people—3.5 times the provincial average.

Other noted issues include drug and alcohol abuse and gang violence. A community member who works for the Strengthening Families Program describes La Loche as a “community in crisis,” saying, “We could declare this as a state of emergency.”

While on the surface, the shooting in La Loche may sound like other school shootings that have taken place over the years in Canadian and American cities, Murray Mandryk, of the *Regina Leader-Post*, suggests that this one was different because it was inevitable. It was different because the community had been pleading for help for decades. It was different because we could have stopped it. Mandryk simply concludes that “we need to stop ignoring La Loche and spend the money on the social supports it needs.”

Other journalists have been less harsh in their assessment of the situation, but there seems to be widespread agreement that what happened in La Loche was a wake-up call for Canadians—that we need to do more for Métis and First Nations communities that are struggling without adequate social supports and resources.

On Feb. 2, several members of my congregation, St. Andrew's, Saskatoon, joined with Christians and people of other faiths for a time of reflection and prayer for those who died, those who were injured, their families and friends, and the whole community of La Loche. The service was hosted by St. John's Anglican Cathedral. Bluejay Linklater began

**La Loche has the
highest rate of suicide
in the province—
43.4 suicide deaths
per 100,000 people—
3.5 times the
provincial average**

the service by drumming a “Song of Mourn” and ended with a “Rising Song.” Harry Lafond, executive director of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, brought greetings and challenged us to reflect on what happened in the context of the continuing need for reconciliation and healing in First Nations and Métis communities throughout our country.

Although La Loche is a long way away, those injured in the shooting have been cared for right here in Saskatoon at our hospitals, and the grandmother of one of the victims was able to attend the City Prayer Service for the People of La Loche. After the welcome by the dean of St. John's, Scott Pittendrigh, she shared the good news that her granddaughter, still recovering in the ICU, had woken up for the first time that day.

I was privileged to be invited to assist with leading the singing that evening, as well as to lead prayers of intercession for all those impacted by the tragedy. The service included words of hope and healing from Isaiah 43, Psalm 46, and Revelation 21, a thoughtful homily by Dean Scott, lighting candles to remember the light that shines in the darkness, a reading from the Qur'an and short reflection by Dr. Mateen Raazi from the Islamic Association of Saskatchewan, the Lord's Prayer shared in a First Nations language, and an offering gathered for the school children of La Loche.

Organizing and attending a prayer service for La Loche was a small thing to do for a community that is both reeling from this tragedy and struggling in many ways. If we have truly experienced the La Loche shooting as a wake-up call, then we need to stay awake. We need to pay attention to the quieter pleas for assistance from other northern communities, and we need to make sure that our governments take action towards long-term improvements.

Working diligently on the Calls to Action put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada would be a good way to begin. As Harry Lafond pointed out during our prayer service, the recommendations of the TRC offer “a tool kit so that we can begin to initiate change in our own hearts, because that's where it all has to begin—and from there to our families and our communities, to Saskatchewan and Canada.” Let us keep La Loche and all our small, northern communities in our prayers, as well as advocate for the resources and support they need to grow healthy, hopeful, thriving communities where such tragic events do not happen. ✚

Rev. Amanda Currie is minister at St. Andrew's, Saskatoon, Sask.



New Book Considers Justice Reform

A January book launch in Ottawa announced the release of *Looking for Ashley: Re-reading what the Smith case reveals about the governance of girls, mothers and families in Canada*.

The book was written by Rebecca Bromwich (pictured above, right), a lawyer and member of St. Andrew's, Ottawa. She also represents the Presbyterian Church on the board of the Church Council on Justice and Corrections, an inter-church organization committed to restorative justice.

Looking for Ashley is based on Bromwich's doctoral thesis, and "addresses the thematic question of how girls and women's agencies and subjectivities can be made legible to the law," Bromwich told the *Record*.

"As a lawyer, I have many times represented all kinds of people, some of them adolescent girls, and the notion of how we represent people as lawyers, and in the texts that make up the formal discourses of the law, is taken for granted and seldom questioned. Yet, we have serious problems as a society when the subjective experiences of adolescent girls, and women too, form part of a legal case. How can girls be understood, believed, made legible, to the law?"

Ashley Smith grew up in New Brunswick and was first taken into custody for throwing apples at a postal worker at age 15. An escalating series of charges relating to disciplinary infractions while in both youth and adult custody kept her in the prison system for the next four years—with much of that time spent in solitary confinement. On Oct. 19, 2007, at the age of 19 and in the custody of Corrections Canada, Smith took her own life while two guards watched. Following a public outcry, an inquest was launched. A jury ruled her death a homicide, citing that the correctional system was responsible for—and could have prevented—the young woman's death.

"The book launch was an opportunity to ... remember the girl at the heart of the case, Ashley Smith," said Bromwich, "who should not be forgotten in Canadian criminal justice and public safety as our new government grapples with the very thematic questions I look at in the book: How can the justice and correctional systems engage more fairly and equally with our diverse populace?"

Looking for Ashley is available through demeterpress.org or as an e-book at amazon.ca. —Amy MacLachlan

Retiring With Meaning

A NEW SERIES at Crieff Hills Community Retreat and Conference Centre will focus on making the most of retirement, helping people look beyond financial concerns to decipher a renewed purpose and set new goals for their senior years.

"Research shows that we live happier and longer lives when we have a strong sense of purpose," said Lawrence Pentelow, director at Crieff. "Through our Retirement with Meaning events, it is our hope that people will be able to identify that purpose. It is knowing that God isn't done with us yet that draws us on to actively look to find where we fit after retirement."

To that end, Crieff has created a series of events targeting those who are already retired or will be retiring soon. The first is a two-night retreat in April, facilitated by Rev. Dr. Andrew Irvine and entitled "Living with the spirit of adventure."

A similar event with Irvine will run in October, as well as a four-day retreat next spring with Rev. Kirk Summers that will focus more on fellowship and community-building.

"There is plenty of information out there about financial planning for retirement, but very little to help people to find purpose and meaning in this life transition," said Pentelow. "Retirement becomes a time to live well and completely. A time for giving back and a time to leave a legacy."

Crieff Hills is located about an hour northwest of Toronto, and is owned by the Presbyterian Church. To sign up for the retreat, or to find out more, call 1-800-884-1525 or visit crieffhills.com. —AM

GENEROUS DONATION STARTS REFUGEE SPONSORSHIPS AT KNOX, GODERICH, ONT.

Thanks to a donor who provided \$25,000 and a church that agreed to step up and take on the task, two families of Syrian refugees will get to make a new start in Goderich, Ont.

The person who provided the initial funds “has a passion for the world,” said Rev. Bill Vanderstelt, minister at Knox. He said the donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, approached the session in the fall of 2015. They were

willing to donate enough money to sponsor a family from Syria if others in the congregation would take on the work that would be required.

Knox was already contributing financially to the Welcome Project, a refugee sponsorship put together by the local ministerial group. It was working to bring a Sudanese family to Canada.

When the congregation at Knox agreed to take on its own sponsorship, it dubbed its efforts the Welcome Project Syria.

“My dad’s a Dutch immigrant and we said, you know, when immigrants come they like to have people to talk to,” said Vanderstelt. “So our suggestion was there probably should be not just one family or one big family, but if we had a couple of families they would be able to converse together; they would be able to start forming community. And so we decided we would support another family.”

The church is now sponsoring two groups—a family of three and a family of six. A mother, father and their three-year-old daughter were expected to arrive by the end of February.

Vanderstelt said he “was never really worried about the money” that would be required to sponsor an additional six people. “I’ve always found Presbyterians are very generous when they see a cause that they can identify with and stand behind.”

“The project certainly is doing what the donor had hoped it would do because it really involved both the congregation in mission and it involved the community in the congregation,” he said. The Welcome Project Syria has expanded to include a broad range of people of various ages and backgrounds.

“This has been very good at moving people from thinking about it to actually doing the work of mission.” —CW

Roma Family That Lived in ‘Sanctuary’ in a Toronto Church Permitted to Return to Canada

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT has granted residency status to a Roma family that had lived under “sanctuary” protection in Windermere United Church, Toronto, for 18 months.

Arif Virani, parliamentary secretary to Canada’s Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, told the jubilant congregation on Feb. 7 that the Pusuma family was now free to return to Canada.

“Advocacy works and you just proved it,” Virani declared.

The Pusuma family—Jozsef, Timea, and their infant daughter Viktoria (known as Lulu)—fled their native Hungary after white supremacists attacked them with baseball bats in front of their home. Jozsef had been a volunteer with a human rights hotline investigating hate crimes.

When their Canadian lawyer mishandled their application, the family was denied refugee status and slated for deportation.

The efforts of an interfaith support network were crucial. The network launched a “Free Lulu” campaign that received wide media coverage. Meanwhile, the Pusuma family lived inside the church. When the former Minister of Immigration refused to reopen the Pusumas’ case, the family felt there was no choice but to leave Canada and they were deported.

In her sermon on Feb. 7, Rev. Alexa Gilmour quoted anthropologist Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.” —Kristine Greenaway/WCC

Urgent Food Assistance Needed in South Sudan, UN Warns

Almost a quarter of people in South Sudan are in urgent need of food assistance, three United Nations organizations warned in February.

“The situation in South Sudan has deteriorated due to the ongoing conflicts,” said Guy Smagghe, executive director of Presbyterian World Service & Development. “Unfortunately, many farmers had to leave their lands behind, and the harvests that they were counting on for survival.”

Tens of thousands of people have been killed and 2 million people have fled their homes since war broke out in December 2013 between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and those who back his former deputy, Riek Machar.

Several Canadian church agencies have been providing aid and funds through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. —CW

Faith

Deepening your relationship with God

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY

Awkward Palm Sunday

Going beyond our limits.

by KATIE MUNNIK

When I was growing up, Palm Sunday was the day when it felt like everyone was in the choir. I loved being in the choir. Processing was the best part. The organ swells, you are surrounded by singers—adults and children alike—and you are marching. A little glimpse of glory every Sunday morning for this suburban girl. I even wrote about it in my middle school yearbook profile. Not a cool move socially, but processing with the choir, I always felt mighty.

Then on Palm Sunday, everyone took to their feet. Or so it seemed. Really, we were >

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY, continued

just joined by the rest of the Sunday school. But with banners and palm branches waving, we thronged to the front of the church, shouting our loud hosannas to beat the band.

As an adult, Palm Sunday feels different.

I'm not sure if it is awkward because waving at parades is out of character for most Presbyterian congregations or because we know all too well where the week ahead will lead. Or maybe this kind of imaginative historical re-enactment doesn't quite feel like worship. We are self-conscious when we're handed the palms.

There is also an undiscussed story of disappointment running through the Palm Sunday narrative. The crowds have heard the age-old messiah promise. They were expecting a king, and it was high time, too. Rome's boot was heavy and their religious leaders had no real comfort to offer. But the kingdom Jesus proclaimed was almost unrecognizable when held up against the crowd's expectation. This disappointment led the crowd to fickleness, and, less than a week later, they were the ones who called, "crucify!"

Enter our adult Palm Sunday guilt. We know how easily we, too, turn fickle, how readily we lash out.

But let's look at that disappointment. And that awkwardness, too. It comes because we, like the crowds, believe we've heard one promise—comfort, order, safety in the moment—and really, the gift is going to be so much bigger.

Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises because he is transcendent. There's a word to teach the kids. To be transcendent is, quite literally, to step over and to go beyond. Palm Sunday is one illustration of that eternal moment of going beyond. When Jesus enters Jerusalem, he surpasses every

expectation we've had of how God will be present in our lives and in our world.

There is an illustration that shines with transcendence in the children's devotion book *Thoughts to Make Your Heart Sing* by Sally Lloyd-Jones and

**Palm Sunday's
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won't all be together**


Jago. Often child-friendly art is soft-focused or overly bright and shiny, aiming for easy and friendly rather than compelling and contemplative. Jago's art in this book is neither; instead, it is rich, delightful and full of references to centuries of faith-filled artists. The transcendent illustration is a reworking of a fresco by the Italian Renaissance painter, Piero della Francesca showing the moment of the resurrection. The Risen Christ stands with one foot firmly planted on his tomb as if he is stepping over the edge of the grave, going beyond the limits of death to emerge victorious into life everlasting. In Jago's illustration, the edges are blurred as are the faces of the sleeping guards, and your eye is drawn to the openness of the sky and to Christ's living flesh. The

accompanying meditation by Sally Lloyd-Jones asks us to reflect on Christ's words from the cross: "It is finished." Lloyd-Jones writes:

"What was finished?"

"Jesus was saying: Everything you need to come back home to God, everything you need to be free and happy in God, everything you need to live forever, I've done it all!"

Palm Sunday's awkwardness has its roots in our understandable incomprehension of what that means. Maybe kids are better at not understanding. Maybe that's why their Palm Sunday joy is easier and louder. We feel awkward and can only humbly echo Martin Luther, mumbling that "as little as children know in their mother's womb about their birth, so little do we know about life everlasting."

But we are given glimpses. In every celebration, every ritual of human life, sparks of eternal life shine through. We glimpse lasting joy in our fleeting celebrations. Palm Sunday's parades can feel awkward because we do know what else will happen in Holy Week, but isn't that life, too? In every family celebration, we know that the day will come when we won't all be together. In every seasonal feast, we know that there will be hungry days and lonely days. But just as we know that Good Friday is not the end of Holy Week's story, we know that our hunger and our loneliness will not be the end. We hold the promise of life everlasting. We do not understand it, but we hold it as a gift. 

*Katie Munnik is a writer, wife and mother to three young children, and lives in Cardiff, Wales. She blogs at The Messy Table every Monday, at presbyterianrecord.ca. Be sure to read her post on Laura Alary's new book, *Make Room: A Child's Guide to Lent and Easter*.*



PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

Called to Forget

Looking for God's faithfulness.

by LAURENCE DEWOLFE

Sunday, March 13, Fifth Sunday in Lent
Isaiah 43:16-21
Philippians 3:4b-14

We don't expect God to command us to forget! Especially in the middle of a rehearsal of all God has done for us in the past. What are we supposed to forget? Or try to forget. Voluntary forgetting is hard.

In Isaiah 43 the prophet speaks to the exiles. After a generation in a foreign land they've received word they can go home. Some of them have already made the trip. And things in the old country aren't rosy.

People can forget a lot as a generation passes away. Isaiah and other prophets call the people back to their roots. Back to knowing who they are, why they are, and who they belong to. >

PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY, continued

It's an invitation to look for the thread of God's faithfulness, even through episodes shaped by human unfaithfulness and sin

Through Isaiah, God also calls them to forget. Forget what? Forget the version of the past they know best. The sin, the unfaithfulness that the prophets said led to Israel's exile. Leave behind the legacy of the last generation of leaders.

God also calls the people to forget how God punished them in the past. That's a pretty tough request! We know how easily we forget the love we've known. But we remember every hurt, and we carry our grievances

a long, long time.

"Let it go!" God says. "Look ahead! I'm already doing a new thing!" A new thing just as powerful, just as history-making, just as world-shaping as God's mighty acts in the mostly-forgotten past. God is as faithful today, to the exiles, as God was to their ancestors in blood and in faith.

This isn't a call to read history through rose-coloured glasses. It's an invitation to look for the thread of God's faithfulness, even through episodes shaped by human unfaithfulness and sin. The challenge is to remember in a way that sets us free to carry faith forward and leave both grievance and nostalgia behind.

We can live faithfully in the present and trust God for the future when we're grounded in God's faithfulness. When we stop expecting repeat performances from God and look for the

new thing God is already doing. When we stop dreaming that God will turn back the pages so we can re-live a story we've re-written as romance.

If anyone has reason to glory in his past, Paul certainly does. He's too hard on himself. From where we sit we can see how his past shaped him to be who he has become as an apostle. In his former life he learned his scripture and tradition. He developed his gifts for speaking and improvising. His mind was shaped to think theologically. He became a disciplined, often driven man. Still, he looks around at what God is doing through him, and ahead to what God has in store for him. He counts all his past achievements as a pile of manure.

Let him exaggerate to make his point. Nothing he has done, that God enabled him to do, can earn him a single favour from God. Or guarantee his future with God. Maybe he can give thanks for his past, in a calmer moment. Maybe he can remember how God was faithful to him before he met Jesus and began a whole new life. But Paul has a vision of the new thing God is already doing. He sees God leading him forward now. And he knows where his new course will end.

God calls, "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old." Paul answers, "This one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus."

What does God call you and your congregation to forget today? What do you need to leave behind so you can press on? ➕

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe is senior minister at Glenview, Toronto.

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RENEWAL

Resurrection-Shaped Renewal

We need more than cosmetic changes. *by* IAN SHAW

THE CANADIAN VERNACULAR has several expressions, such as paradigm shift, watershed or game changer to describe a significant alteration in life. Things will now be radically different.

The Christian Church has long contended that the historical shift in human existence is Jesus' resurrection. Jaroslav Pelikan, a renowned historian, expressed this truth thus:

"If Christ is risen, nothing else matters. And if Christ is not—nothing else matters." Paul expresses similar thoughts in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 concluding, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and ... we are of all people most to be pitied."

The resurrection is pivotal for faith and for hope—and also for the purposes of this article about renewal. Renewal can >

RENEWAL, continued

have many concepts or images. Some are essentially cosmetic in essence, like re-painting a room. Other expressions are more substantive, as in moving walls, adding a room and filling in the swimming pool. And still others are very thorough—the complete razing of the existing bungalow and building a two-storey house, with only some of the original foundation kept intact.

For all my time as a minister of word and sacraments, the theme of “Renewing the Church,” and in particular the Presbyterian Church in Canada, has been on the table. Prior to that period of my ministry, I was a member of the State of the Church Committee (perhaps the token lay and youth representative?) which identified areas for renewal.

If we were to use the resurrection of Jesus as a model through which to assess our persistent search for renewal, what might we learn?

Well, first, the cosmetic variety of change doesn't appear to be an option. Even those close to Jesus (e.g., Cleopas and Mary) have some initial difficulty recognizing him, so something more than surface change has likely happened. Then there is the

mysterious “now you see him, now you don't” ability of the risen Jesus. He is among his followers one moment, more or less as he always was; and then, without an “Excuse me” or shifting in his chair or opening a door, he's gone. Thus cosmetic change as a resurrection-shaped renewal option seems to be ruled out.

Setting the physical elements of resurrection aside for a moment, the core essence of Jesus seems little altered by resurrection. The deep compassion that typified his ministry continues to dominate his post-Easter interactions. See, for example, his deliberate and thorough embracing of Peter, who had denied him, and his gentle reaching out to Thomas, the doubter. The aura of enigma that tinged much of his teaching continues as he deepens the disciples' comprehension of the scriptures, but leaves some things for future discovery under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

So to my mind, if the risen Jesus is the template we use to form the shape and goals of renewal in the PCC, we will pursue change that is substantive, and maybe even thorough, in its nature. Yet it will be change that maintains the root or core of the gospel, which is

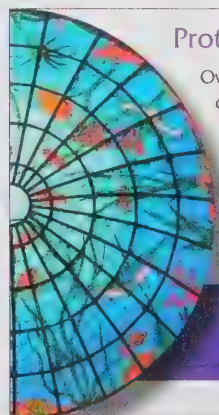
perhaps as succinctly stated in John 3:16-17 as anywhere else.

So how are we doing? How have we done? From my perspective, as well-intended as these decades of discussions and endeavours have been, I observe mostly cosmetic efforts. We tweak worship music, preach without a tie or collar, institute term eldership, even alter national committee structures, and though all those can be worthwhile, we continue to be essentially a Christendom-shaped church in attitude, approach, structure and practice. We are still rooted as much (or more) in our culture as we are in the resurrection.

Thus, after decades of what appears to be a fruitless pursuit of substantive renewal, I sometimes begin to despair, somewhat like Paul in Romans 7:21-24. Then I read on to verse 25 (“Who will rescue me ... ? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”). This triumphant shout of hope is immediately expanded in the following Easter-themed verses of Romans 8. In that glorious portrayal of resurrection hope, I am reminded that God is bringing this groaning creation, this struggling denomination of mine and this wretched mass of brokenness known as Ian Shaw into greater and deeper levels of wholeness because Jesus lives, and because the Spirit is pouring the power of new life into our world through God's holy, beloved and faithful children.

And maybe one day soon we will see and be part of a substantive, thorough renewal which will reflect and proclaim the joy of resurrection that we have sought for so long. Hallelujah! ☩

Ian Shaw is married to Linda, the chair of the Renewal Fellowship board, and has recently retired as a minister. They live in Simcoe, Ont.



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SHARING WITNESS

Day by Day

Getting over it is not easy. *by* **VIVIAN KETCHUM**

I AM A DRUNK, a former drunk. Sober by faith. I admit I made mistakes with my children as a young mother. Even lost a child to Child and Family Services.

This was all after the days of residential school and many of us were self-destructive as adults. Struggling to find our way on a broken path created by past history. Lost parenting skills, disconnected from family, and various forms of substance abuse. Suicide. I fully understand that path.

Part of understanding the history of residential schools is what happened afterwards. The Presbyterian Church closed Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in the early 1970s; but life became chaotic for me.

The family that I once knew was gone.

I was about eight or nine years old. My parents drank; it was a series of foster homes or group homes for me and my siblings. I was made a ward of the court until I was 18. This was after a serious suicide attempt when I was just 14 years old.

I became a young mother in my early 20s. I was fortunate that my son's father's family helped me with my new baby. During that time I was drinking so heavily I was headed to an early grave. I met an aboriginal woman who helped get me into a treatment centre and I began the long road to daily sobriety.

I had my second child afterwards, but lost him to Child and Family Services. The never-ending cycle of disconnection wouldn't end with me. I was struggling to become a good and sober mother. I was now a single parent. ➤

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SHARING WITNESS, continued

I returned to my home community in Kenora, Ont., after living in Winnipeg for a couple of years. The desire to reconnect with my family was part of the reason to move back. My dad passed away and my mother stopped drinking. She was being a good grandmother. My mother loved taking my son blueberry picking and sharing her love of traditional foods with him. As my son got older, he loved listening to my mother talk in Ojibwa; he said it was comforting to him. My mother was giving my son a gift of the past—her language—which was nearly erased by residential schools.

By now my life was more stable and I returned to school to try to finish grade 12. I became involved in social issues. I even became involved in residential school issues in Kenora.

Anger at what happened to me as a child in residential school was what first motivated me. Anger at the church for what it did to me. I was writing and speaking publicly about the issue. Awareness of the residential schools and the abuse that happened was just starting to become a focal point in my home community. The “bear” was starting to waken from its slumber. Many of us in Kenora and the surrounding area had attended residential school or knew family members who did.

This is only a brief history of what happened to me after being in residential school. I am still sober due to my faith. I reconnected with the child I lost to Child and Family Services when he was a young adult and he found me. Through my renewed relationship with my mother, I have gained a true appreciation and love for my Aboriginal culture. I have become a good mother through trial and error. Getting over my residential school past, as some people have told me, is not easy—something I continue to discover on a day-to-day basis. +

Vivian Ketchum is Anishinabe of Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation, outside of Kenora, Ont. She lives in Winnipeg.

Life

Thoughts and inspiration for your daily life

FAMILY

Wonderful Reminders

Seeing God's hand in every day. *by* PATRICIA SCHNEIDER

I think most widows have things in their lives that are like triggers. Triggers that set in motion those memories that nearly take you to your knees. You can go on for days, weeks, months without a tear and then like a rogue wave, this memory hits you and there you are, not able to breathe, with tears streaming down your face.

I had such an incident yesterday.

Our small city is celebrating its 100th birthday and has decided to name several new city parks after some of its "old timers." One is to be called Schneider Park after my husband. I was so delighted, as it is a children's park, with swings, slides and monkey >

Felicity Alexander



A Presbyterian annuitant who has good reasons to celebrate



Having her cake and eating it, too!

“Some years ago I attended a couple of Planned Giving seminars and, after discussions with my son—who is a CA and a Chartered Financial Analyst—I decided that a gift annuity would allow me to leave something to my church when I die, but still enjoy the benefit of income from the money while I am alive. So that’s like having my cake and eating it, too. Here’s what happened...

“In January 2010, I wrote a cheque for \$20,000 to the Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and got an immediate charitable donation receipt for \$5,600. I receive \$1,070 in income from the annuity every year, and, thanks to the CRA, the taxable portion of that annual amount is so small that there’s nothing to pay. It’s a win-win situation!”



The above words are adapted from a presentation Felicity Alexander made to her home congregation, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, in Brampton, Ontario, on the benefits of gift annuities for both donors and the church.

The above example is for illustrative purposes only. Gift annuity rates are subject to change.

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FAMILY, continued

bars. I drove over yesterday to see this park. I sat on a bench and said a prayer for all the children who would visit—that they would be happy, safe and blessed. My husband would love having children enjoy “his” park.

I had already gotten into the car when a small boy turned and waved at me. Somehow in his demeanour I could see my husband as a little boy and he smiled and gave me such a long wave. It was all I could do not to rush out of the car and give him a hug.

Okay, so I am a sentimental old fool, but that smile and wave have warmed my heart all day. I believe God sends you little messages. I am far more sensitive to these messages now than I used to be, maybe because I have the time to notice them. They appear in my life almost each day.

The other day my grandson sent a picture of his two daughters sitting, looking across the playground, with their backs to him but their arms around each other. “Sisters,” I labelled it and thought again of my own special sister who had died so young... a reminder of the graciousness of God to have given me such a loving playmate.

When you are young, you are so busy, busy—earning a living, raising a family, building a life—that sometimes you take so much for granted. More and more I see God in the architecture of my life. His hand led me and helped me when I stumbled. His hand supplied all my needs and most of my wants.

And today God’s hands reach out with little reminders that He is still there, where He has always been, loving me and making my world such a wonder.

Thank you, Lord. ☩

Patricia Schneider is a proud mother and grandmother living in Alberta. She blogs at presbyterianrecord.ca every Monday.



The author's mother's garden.

REFLECTION

The Master Gardener

Her faith and her gardens flourished together.

by BETH ELLIOTT

SHE JOKINGLY REFERRED to herself as the Grand Master Gardener as she lurched around the backyard on her battery-powered scooter; the arrow on the speed control always aligned with the picture of the hare, never the tortoise. Although she only operated her scooter at rabbit speed, in her life's greatest battle she persevered like the tortoise.

When her life expectancy was four months, she lived another five years. Doctors thought she may not survive her broken femur, or would at least cease to walk when a metal rod was needed to hold together her "good" leg. She did survive, and, unwilling to be slowed down, she purchased a walker to get around her home, and the scooter for her gardens. >

REFLECTION, continued

Her doctors were at a loss for what kept this cancer-riddled woman alive. "We can do nothing more for you," they said. "Whatever you're doing, keep doing it."

So she continued to devote much of her time to studying the scriptures in her Women's Devotional Bible and working in her extensive gardens. During my mom's 12-year battle with cancer, her faith and her gardens flourished in parallel. She began speaking openly about her gratitude for the life she had lived and her peace with the inevitable next step of her journey. Her gardens were a stop on the horticulture club's Millennium Tour.

The doctors did share some gentle words of caution. They warned against the Master Gardener's eager anticipation of both of her daughters' weddings, as well as the birth of her first grandchild. She was not only present

for all of these events, she celebrated each with gusto.

The gardens in her sizable backyard looked beautiful at the time of my wedding, even for the month of June, when the perennials tease their audience with the grandeur of blossoms to come the following month. Unfortunately, that year the Master Gardener would not be home to enjoy her gardens when they were in full bloom. She fell and fractured her left arm in mid-July, and thus began an extended and final stay in the hospital.

Between hospital visits I would go home, don my gardening clothes, and head into the mid-summer humidity, digger in one hand, empty pail in the other, and weeds at my mercy. Virginia creeper would not be wrapping itself around the lilies if Mom were home. Over the course of a few hours my bucket would be filled several times over and the garden would be watered with my tears.

In the seasons following the Master Gardener's death, my spirit began to resemble her gardens. Opportunistic weeds sprouted in the lonely terrain, choking out the more desirable growth. Some were becoming well established. Eradicating such invaders can be difficult and there was much work to be done to restore order to Mom's gardens, as well as my own.

IT WAS 10 YEARS AGO that I attacked the towering thistles and feathery clover that tried to overgrow the Master Gardener's perennial beds. Ten years. I can hardly believe it, until I consider the landscape of my current life, which is very different than the one she was part of. There is my husband—my rock—and two colourful new shoots that I tend to every day.

I can talk about the Master Gardener now without crying, usually, if the topic is sufficiently lighthearted. Some weeds are persistent though. The deep-rooted sadness that stems from the loss of the spirited gardener, friend, and confidant that I proudly called Mom is my undying dandelion.

Sometimes I play a game with myself, in an effort to make me feel like the Master Gardener is still part of my days. I try to imagine what she would say about certain things in my life now. For example: my children's behaviour, my work-life balance, my spirituality, my gardens... my weeds. It is difficult to predict some of the things that she would share, but I know one thing for certain; the Grand Master Gardener would want all of her beautiful creations to be weed-free. ☘

Beth Elliott is a writer in Ottawa. Visit her at bethelliottwriter.com.

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MISSION

Everyone is Important

Portland Place helps the forgotten thrive.

by LAURA HEMING

Portland Place is a long-term housing facility in downtown Toronto undergoing some changes after 24 years of growth. Supported by the Presbyterian Church in Canada and branched out of Evangel Hall—a mission for people who are homeless or vulnerable—this not-for-profit housing facility is a place where many people have come alive in identity,

confidence and acceptance.

Within its 46 housing units, Portland Place commits to walking alongside each of the 60-plus residents—families, couples and singles—in everything from practical life skills to general emotional and physical support. The residents participate in daily and weekly activities, connecting through communal meals, cooking groups, >

MISSION. continued

holiday celebrations, skills training and tenant assistant job programs. Each activity allows the residents to learn the daily tasks and skills they may lack.

"Many of our residents are those who are typically pushed to the edges of society," says Norma McClure, former general manager.

"The majority of our residents face major mental health issues, developmental challenges, addictions, long-term issues, and barriers in employment. These are folks who have struggled to thrive in today's society. We help them to thrive as much as possible."

McClure is stepping down from her position after 24 years, and can still recall when she first heard about the job. "After completing my sociology and English degree, my minister knew I was looking for something meaningful to do. He led me to a bulletin board advertising the creation of Portland Place and their need for some help in the start up."

McClure walked in blindly to a position with many early challenges and eventually, many glories. "The learning curve was steep. This was not a group I had experience with, but I just wanted to help people find a place. So much of it was learning on the fly—taking what worked well and running with it."

One of the things McClure and the original staff established early on was to consistently celebrate life. "We remind people that they are not and will not be forgotten. One of those is the birthday cake tradition. In the early years, there was a man with us who had a brain injury. We always would tell him how great and valuable he was. It was not until we celebrated him with a birthday cake with his name on it that I think he really understood our care for him. He

'The majority of our residents face major mental health issues ... These are folks who have struggled to thrive in today's society. We help them to thrive as much as possible'

burst into tears exclaiming that we really did love him. Needless to say, that tradition stuck around."

Along with celebrations came changes—something McClure has accepted as a means of growth.

"As we developed and brought more people in, we were able to house people with more severe challenges. We have become an instantly accepting community—something I'm not sure was there at the start."

McClure is passing her wisdom on to recent University of Toronto graduate Clara Menard, whom McClure sees as one of the unique people who really understands the fragility of this work.

"I watched Clara with the tenants when she worked part-time. She has a very calm, rational and wise way about

her and she really gets the ethos of Portland Place. She's got a great heart and a wise head—she thinks these people are important and loved."


Menard studied psychology and has a Master of Social Work. "It's a really special place. The community there is so unique—it's very flexible to the needs of each client. Because it's a smaller community, it allows for more intensive support. There aren't many places like it in Toronto," she says.

Now settled and grasping her role more fully, with the full support of McClure, her mentor, Menard hopes to see Portland Place continue to grow by seeing it stay exactly the same.

"You don't really want to mess with a good thing. Norma has created a very strong model. I just want to spread that model and show people how well it works."

Menard also hopes to attract younger people to be aware of and help with the mission, creating an online presence to reach them and to help them understand that housing is an important issue in Canada today. She plans to shape fundraising around the ways young people involve themselves in charities, implementing fundraisers that allow supporters to be involved in something meaningful while raising money, rather than simply giving.

She invites people of all ages to become involved in the ministry through volunteering, donating and coming out to the fundraisers to experience the community and become aware of the housing issues right outside their door.

To support Portland Place or to find out more about how to be involved, visit pccweb.ca/portlandplace. 

Laura Heming is a writer based in Hamilton, Ont.

HISTORY

Who Knows This McKenzie?

Remembering a forgotten pioneer.

by YUNICE K. MIN

Once there was a sad theme song, *Who Knows This Woman?* written for a famous Korean radio drama series by Han Woon-Sa in 1960. It reminded me of a time when my husband, Samuel Min and I visited the birthplace of Rev. William John McKenzie in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. We inquired at the Pine Hill Divinity College (Atlantic School of Theology), asking, "Who knows this McKenzie?" He ministered in Korea in 1895.

We were fortunate to meet McKenzie's cousin's grandson, Ivan MacKenzie and his cousin's granddaughter, Beverly MacKenzie who both live in the area. The grandchildren invited us to McKenzie's beautiful log house on

the shore of Bras d'Or Lake. We were introduced to Mr. Sauer, whom Beverly joyfully described as, "my grandfather's cousin!" She showed us the book her mother gave her as a marriage gift, *A Corn of Wheat, or, The Life of Rev. W.J. McKenzie of Korea* by Elizabeth McCully, published in 1903.

I could smell the piny fragrance from the Pine Hill Divinity College where McKenzie studied, the pine hill of his birthplace in Bras d'Or Lake, and from the Sorae Church in the pine hill village of Whanghae-Do, Korea, where he offered himself as "a corn of wheat" (a reference to John 12:24).

McKenzie listened, and God's voice led him to become the first Canadian

Presbyterian missionary to Chosun (Korea), an unknown, strange world where he followed God's will for his life.

He wore Korean clothes, and ate and lived in a small house with Korean villagers. At Christmas, he was sent a box of homemade sweet bread, but he gave it to the poor children. Next spring in 1895, the villagers decided to build Sorae Church while McKenzie started a day school, named McKenzie School. McKenzie directed a church in Korea to be built at his expense.

Around the time of the establishment of the church in Sorae, there was the First Sino-Japanese War and the Donghak Rebellion. McKenzie was in grave danger even though there were many believers.

He fell ill and ended his days as a Christ-like ambassador at age 34. At his graveside lay a Bible and St. George's flag. A little boy, Sue Byoung-Ho, was present at the funeral and he later became one of the leaders of the Korean independence movement and the elder of Saemoon-Ahn Church.

It is a shame that there is no marking of McKenzie's birthplace in Cape Breton and his name is not marked on a memorial plaque in the Pine Hill chapel.

My husband, Samuel Min was a Presbyterian elder in Seoul. He has a dream to someday mark "the McKenzie Hill" by planting 34 pine trees there in McKenzie's hometown of West Bay, in collaboration with the Korean churches in Canada. It would be a much-needed commemoration of McKenzie's remarkable short life; "a corn of wheat" given to others as a pioneer missionary to Korea. ☩

Yunice K. Min was born in Seoul, Korea, and is a member at St. Giles Kingsway, Toronto.

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Dear Friends of the Presbyterian Record,

I WONDER IF YOU WERE AS MOVED AS I WAS BY THE STORY OF MAHAD, THE SYRIAN REFUGEE, and her family in the November issue of the *Record*? Maybe you watched some of the videos posted on our website and Facebook pages. I felt as if I was right there with these people as they shared their stories with us. I hope you did, too.

IT WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT YOU. Your generous support of the *Record* is what made it possible for Andrew Faiz to travel to Central and Eastern Europe to cover this heartbreaking crisis.

YOUR UNFAILING SUPPORT has allowed us to bring you so many of these stories over the years—stories of people whose lives are being touched and transformed by the work of Presbyterians around the world.

YOUR DONATION ALSO HELPS US CLOSER TO HOME, TOO. The *Record* provides a unique forum for Presbyterians to engage in current issues of life and faith. Through these pages, Presbyterians in Canada have a chance to talk with one another, even though one person might be in a pew on the East coast and another on the West. Over the past 10 years, you have invested more than \$1.2 million in the *Record*. The magazine simply wouldn't be here today without you!

WE KNOW MANY OF YOU WANT TO SEE THE WORK OF THE RECORD CONTINUE, so we are creating more opportunities for you to help make that happen. We will work with you to find the type of gift that works best for you, minimizing your taxes, providing for your family and maximizing your gift to the *Record*, whether that's endowing the magazine for the future or creating an opportunity to support a special project, such as an annual overseas reporting mission.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THESE OPPORTUNITIES, please call our Director of Development, Lisa Van Arem at 416-411-1111 ext. 305 or email her at lvanarem@presbyterian.ca.

ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE RECORD TEAM, THANK YOU for your continuing partnership and generosity. Lisa and I look forward to meeting with many of you in the coming months to discuss some of the exciting possibilities of working together. Your feedback and advice can only enhance the quality of the *Record*. Working together, we will make a difference.

Warmest regards,



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George H Brent
(Catherine Brent)
Lucille Breser
(Ruth Lemke)
Rev Dr Larry Brice
(Christina Walker)
Donna Buntwell
(Nell Cavan)
Rev Alex K Campbell
(Joanne Dunlop)
Allan Carlyle
(Maude Carlyle)
Agnes & Roy Cleland
(Marjory McConnell)
W E Coutts
(Patricia Kirby)
Rev Craig & Marlene Cribar
(Mr & Mrs John Grebby)
Heather Grace Crowdis
(Maxwell & Shirley Judd)
Pat Cruickshank
(Judy-Anne Cruickshank)
Annie Cumming
(Carole Ann Anderson)
Bob & Val Davidson
(Cheryl Denomy)
Deceased Family Members
(Barbara MacDonald)
Jean Dudley
(Arnold Dudley)
Elsie May
(Archibald McCallum)
John Fitzpatrick
(Elizabeth Fitzpatrick)
Brooke Fraser, son
(Shirley Fraser)
Gerry Gartside
(Beverley Feick)
Rev Jonathan Goforth
(Peikang Dai)
Annabelle Grant
(James Grant)
Rev Donald Herbison
(Anonymous)

Gordon Hodgson
(Jeannette Hodgson)
Helen Hornett
(Jack Hornett)
Alex Kerr
(Sheila Kerr)
Kiltie
(Aileen MacDonald)
Noreen & Alvin King
(Glenn King)
Louis Kish
(Darlene Szustystegeso)
Carol Knapper
(Mr H Knapper)
John Lewis
(Nancy Lewis)
Lorna
(John White)
Alberta & Wilfred Love
(Donald Love)
David Lyon
(Carla Lyon)
Rev Alex MacDonald
(Anthony Keith)
Rev Dr D C MacDonald
(Bertha Noddin)
Helen MacDonald
(Edward MacDonald)
Charles B MacDougall
(Douglas & Joyce Agnew)
Pearl MacKeigan
(Dianne MacKeigan)
Dorothy MacKinnon
(John MacKinnon)
Ian MacPhail
(Rosalind MacPhail)
Don Martineau
(Evelyn Martineau)
Dr J Hunter McCracken
(Beverly Lunney)
Bernice McKenzie
(John McKenzie)
Gladys McKillican
(Donald McKillican)
Catherine McMillan
(Duncan & Donna McMillan)
Perce & Bette Milley
(Mr & Mrs K Milley)
My Brother Arthur (1917-1943)
(Edith Klimes)
Rev Fred & Mrs Anna Neil
(Kathleen Diehl)
Kaye Newton
(Robert Newton)
Marion Nisbet
(Patricia Brown)
Our Parents
(Bruce & Bronwyn Hackett)
Jane Paul
(Richard Paul)

R H D Phillips
(Tanyss Phillips)
Mrs Madelaine Potter
(Thomas Drinkeld)
Savi Rawana
(Arnold Rawana)
Carol Reid
(Jean Betzner)
Frank & Rhea Riddell
(Faye Riddell)
Roy & Parents
(Catherine Wilson)
Dorothy & James Rupnarain
(Esther Rupnarain)
Geraldine Sahli
(Eric Sahli)
Connie Schaefer
(William Schaefer)
Dr John Schaefer
(William Schaefer)
Matt & Jean Schrimgeour
(Dorothy Hickey)
David Seaman
(Thelma Seaman)
Peter & Maria Shevchuk
(Vera Shevchuk)
Elizabeth Stainton
(Walter & Janet Brewer)
Henry Swift
(Jacqueline Swift)
Sylvia
(Albert Van der Haven)
Raymond Tate
(Susan Cornelisse)
Terry
(John Jacenty)
Chester Thompson
(Joan Triandafillou)
Mac Thompson
(Phyllis Thompson)
Rev S W Vance & Wife Eleanor
(Irene Bedford)
Rev Jeff Veenstra
(M McKenzie-Leighton)
Bob Walker
(Katherine Napolitano)
Archie Wanless
(Louise Wanless)
Wife Marion
(Breton Partridge)
Rev Dr Douglas A Wilson
(Douglas & Joyce Agnew)

Thinking of ...
Rev Dawn Griffiths, a dear
daughter
(Dorothy Butler) ■



ISTOCK

OPINION

Don't put Family First

Give that spot to God. *by* STEPHEN FARRIS

SOMETIMES punctuation matters. “Family first?” is a question worth considering. “Family first” as a statement is a problem. Other than as an alliterative phrase meaning that healthy families of various sorts are immensely important for human wellbeing, or that Christian worship should be welcoming to all ages, “family first” can be idolatry.

This does not mean the family is not a good thing and a great blessing. Most idols represent things that are good in themselves but have been put in the place of God and are then frozen into lifelessness as graven images.

Idolatry is more than adoring a statue, however. It means putting something other than God first in

our lives. It is getting our core relationships out of proportion so that something other than the love of God comes first. If that is so, the most common form of idolatry in our churches and wider society may be precisely the one that puts “family first.” Lots of people say it quite bluntly. “I come to church for the family.” Attending church is like ballet or minor sports (though not usually as important). We think we should take or send the children so they can grow up morally straight and strong. Lots of Canadians, including folks who profess to be Christians, are at minor sports rather than church on Sunday morning, however, because they do put “family first.” And if family really is first, how can we argue

with them?

It is as if we have rewritten the catechism: “What is our chief end? Our chief end is to produce a healthy, well-adjusted family and enjoy it forever.” If we think God helps achieve that end, we will send or even bring the family to church. God is merciful and can draw people through less than theologically spotless means. If we insisted that people should come to church only for the right reason, attendance would be even lower than it is now! But in the end, God does not tolerate being a means to an end. Our spiritual ancestors got it right: our chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy God forever.

As the church, we hope to provide good programs for families >

OPINION, continued

and draw people in... but not dishonestly. We can't appear to enable idolatry or to practice a bait and switch. "You think it is about family but really, it is about God."

Once, as a small boy, I asked my mother, "Do you love me best?"

Mom replied firmly, "No, I love God first, then your father, then I love you and your brother and sister equally."

I thank God I was raised by a mother who didn't put me, or the family first. Listen to my mother, if you won't listen to me.

Saying "God first" does not mean "Church first" or "Church business first." Active church people are sometimes tempted to put church first. Church may then become an ugly and destructive idol.

Early in my ministry I allowed myself to get too occupied with church business. My sons were three and one-year-old, respectively. One morning I was sitting on the sofa while the boys played at my feet. Three-year-old Allan picked up a book, showed it to me and said, "I'm Daddy. This is my Bible."

"How cute," I thought. "He's imitating me!"

"I'm going to a meeting!" Allan announced.

Accurate, maybe, but not nearly so cute.

Allan put down his book, looked me in the eye, and said, "But maybe tomorrow I'll stay home with my boys."

I felt as if I had been stabbed through the heart. I got up from the sofa, found my appointment book and drew lines through many of the events. The church did

fine without my presence at every single meeting. And the family did much better.

As with all areas of life, if we put God first and, by God's good grace, get that relationship right, all the other relationships have a good chance of falling into place. It's not a guarantee. We all know

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that faithfulness to Jesus Christ can produce anger and discord in a family, especially from those who do want to be put first. There was, after all, trouble in Jesus' own family! (See Mark 3:31-35.)


FAMILY IS, HOWEVER, "first" in one respect. It is in our families that we are shaped for good or ill. Veteran pastors and psychiatrists all know that what we are, for good or for ill, comes through the family. We talk about "stranger danger,"

but too often, it isn't strangers you have to worry about. It's your family! Trouble of every kind will work its way through the family.

But so can good. We begin to learn "all we really need to know" well before kindergarten. We learn it in the family. By all means we should create family friendly programs and worship to draw people into church. But that is only the first half of the job, at best. If people want to hand the Christian education of their children to the church, don't let them! Hand it right back. No, that's not quite right. Enable and motivate families to teach the faith within the home.

Family can be a way of understanding the church. It is not "first" in this respect. Understanding the church as the Body of Christ remains primary. But family is up there among the key ways of understanding and living out the idea of church.

The church is like an extended family where young and old, families of many sorts, and those who otherwise would have no earthly family can come together. Strangely, that kind of extended family, that "village," may then become as a side benefit, the best place to raise a child.

God who came to us in Christ, as part of a very human and very fallible family, whose love is imprinted on our hearts by the Holy Spirit, that triune God can redeem the worst of us and the worst of families... if we put Him first. 

Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris is a retired minister and professor currently living in France.



PWS&D Developments

The quarterly newsletter for Presbyterian World Service & Development • 2016 Edition, Issue 1

ABRIDGED
VERSION



PLANTING SEEDS OF HOPE

"I recently had the privilege of traveling to Guatemala with a group representing the Women's Missionary Society (WMS). As part of the WMS *Together We Can!* project—which is providing support to indigenous women and their families in Guatemala—we visited PWS&D projects that are making an incredible difference for families and communities."

— KAREN BOKMA
(COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR)

...in the ground, in the mind

WE MET THERESA DIAZ IN THE community of Tuixcajchis, up in the western highlands of Guatemala. The scenery around her community is vibrant and dramatic—filled with panoramic views of mountains and trees. It's beautiful, but a difficult place to sustain yourself and support a family. It's in this setting though that Theresa is starting to thrive.

Theresa lost her husband several years ago. Her life was difficult when her husband was alive and became even more of a struggle after his death. Theresa works hard to support the five of her seven children that still live with her.

Tuixcajchis is one of the communities where Presbyterian World Service & Development

partners with AMMID (the Maya-Mam Association for Research and Development) to empower women, increase food security and nutrition, and ensure access to land.

In indigenous communities like Theresa's, people face deep-rooted discrimination and poverty borne out of decades of civil war. A lack of economic opportunity and environmental concerns, such as climate change, encroaching mining operations, and deforestation make it difficult for families to break the cycle of poverty.

The work that PWS&D is supporting is addressing these issues.

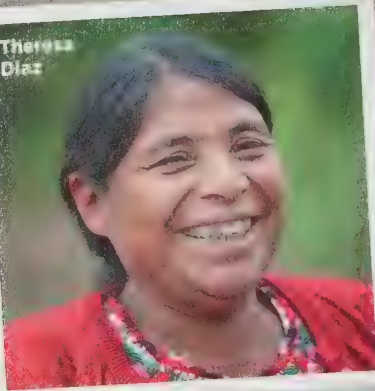
Local partner AMMID is working to ensure that families eat more and better food by improving agricultural practices so that ►

"I learned that I have to prepare my mind as well as the soil. I learned how to take care of myself, as well as my family. And I have learned I have the right to take care of myself."



Guatemalan and Canadian women meet to learn about each other's lives

Theresa Diaz



"I now have new ideas and in every training we improve our lives more. I'm grateful for all I have learned."

the soil produces abundantly. Not only do participants learn how to grow more food, but also how to use it to improve family nutrition. As Theresa shares, "We have been trained in many things—learning about seeds and ideas in how to improve our work and the way we plant. We learned how to prepare the land, but also how to prepare the food we grow."

Theresa didn't learn these activities in isolation, but with a group of women from her community. They form a support system and encourage each other to carry on the work. This is especially important for Theresa's group, as there are many single mothers and widows supporting their families.

Economically, families are faring better as they grow and prepare their own food, rather than buying it from others. The women also

come together to form cooperative groups where they might make artisanal products or sell surplus produce for extra income.

More important even than growing opportunities for the communities is the way the women's attitudes towards themselves have changed. "I learned that I have to prepare my mind as well as the soil. I learned how to take care of myself, as well as my family. And I have learned I have the right to take care of myself," explains Theresa. This growth in self-esteem and pride is evident in every member of the group.

Through PWS&D, indigenous women in Guatemala are learning new ideas, being empowered to care for their families and encouraged to use their creativity to provide hope and opportunity for the future. ■



TEACHING GARDENS

School gardens in Guatemala are helping students learn about nutrition, responsible consumption and environmental stewardship. Learning how to cultivate and cook the organic vegetables they grow means that boys and girls gain knowledge and skills for the future. Advocacy for food security and environmental protection also ensures students learn to raise their voices to protect their rights.

Speaking Truth in Love

Talking about sexuality with respect.

introduced and edited by **ANDREW FAIZ**

Rev.

DR. CLYDE ERVINE set the tone first thing in the morning: “The history of the church’s lack of respect toward LGBT folk is well documented. Though few expect the church to endorse all sexual relationships, we’ve had a heightened contempt for gay people, even though we turn blind eyes to violence, oppression of the poor, sins of speech, as well as various types of heterosexual sin, all of which the Bible condemns.

“Whether or not the [Presbyterian Church in Canada] affirms same-sex intimacy and marriage, and not all gay Christians do, let alone straight ones, it’s time that we repented of the ugly sin of homophobia, as we were told to do in the 1994 Report on Human Sexuality adopted by our church.

“Respect is a biblical issue, as well as a moral one. Admittedly, if you consult a typical theology textbook, you won’t find a chapter on respect; yet as the biblical narrative unfolds, respect becomes the air which God’s people are to breathe, and the name for the lifestyle which God’s people are to live. This is more obvious when we know that respect and the frequent biblical word honour greatly overlap in meaning.”

Ervine was the first of five speakers at an event organized on the last day of January by the Presbytery of Hamilton. It was called Speaking Truth in Love. About 300 people from across southern Ontario gathered at Chedoke, Hamilton, for what proved to be an excellent day of discernment. (At least another 100 watched the proceedings on computers across the country, including at least one congregation’s session.) The speakers were well chosen to represent the breadth, and subtlety, of what the organizers called the traditional and the revisionist viewpoints on issues of sexuality.

Ervine, minister at Knox, St. Catharines, cast back to scripture to illuminate the present debate. “Respect was a key issue for the Apostle Paul. In 1 Corinthians he accuses the church of treating some of its members with contempt: ‘as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you ... do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?’

“Paul critiques what happens within Corinth’s house-churches. As socially prominent members celebrate the Lord’s Supper in the dining room, poor members, many of them no doubt slaves, stand hungry in a hallway. Paul calls it contempt, insisting that every church member is worthy of respect.

1 Corinthians 12:23: ‘those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect.’”

The conversation on sexuality within the PCC has seemed at times more bitter than respectful, with folks on all sides of the issue often quickly devolving into hierarchies and divisions. Facebook forums, whether hosted by the *Record* or national offices, have not always been examples of respectfulness. Ervine expressed the hope that “though angry militants exist at either end of the spectrum, I think it’s possible to debate the issue with respect.” The other speakers proved his point.

Speaking for the traditional side were Rev. Dr. Kevin Livingston, associate professor of pastoral ministry at Tyndale University College and Seminary, Toronto, and Rev. Karla Wübbenhorst, minister at Westminster-St. Paul’s, Guelph. Representing the revisionist position were Rev. Wes Denyer, minister at Rosedale, Toronto, and Rev. Hugh Donnelly, minister at Guildwood Community, Scarborough.

What follows are very brief excerpts from very expansive papers. A lot of the subtlety of the arguments presented with passion and clarity are lost in these excerpts. The full text and the video for each talk are available online. We strongly encourage you to seek these out. We encourage you to organize a gathering—session, congregation, friends—to watch the videos. We encourage you to gather people who do not agree with each other. They will not (may not) agree with each other afterwards. Agreement is not the goal; the Kingdom is. We are the church in Christ first. While you pay attention to the arguments, also pay heed to the tone; see the respect

each speaker brings to those with whom they disagree. Proceed with respect.

Kevin Livingston

HUMAN BEINGS SEEM TO BE EXPERTS at distorting the beautiful things God has made. It seems that anything the Lord has created, men and women can mess up. For example—God created a world filled with beauty for us to enjoy and resources to use. But what have we done? We’ve become greedy and careless with our environment, and in the name of progress nations have blighted the earth’s beauty and stripped its resources and now we face the peril of global warming.

And the same is true about sex. God designed the sexual relationship to bind two people together as one flesh; but men and women have perverted it. We have often misused this most intimate human experience in ways that shatter personalities and provoke self-loathing and shame, and destroy families.

God created a spectrum of pleasures for his children to enjoy, but the sexual experience is to be enjoyed only within the covenant of marriage. I think God did that because God knows that sex is a risky business. God knows that we are never more vulnerable than when we lie in bed with one another. It’s a time to take off our masks and disclose who we really are—our thoughts, our feelings, our bodies. But it’s also possible that such total exposure can destroy us—because we risk being rejected, or scorned, or misunderstood. >

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This is not to
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Indeed I have no
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”

COVER STORY, continued

Sex is a risky business. And that's why God confines it to marriage, where a covenant has been made, where a lifelong commitment has been promised. In the environment of a lifelong commitment, trust and security can grow. Fears and anxieties and inhibitions can subside.

But sex outside of marriage and sex before marriage and sex beyond the bounds of male-female complementarity have all been deemed by our Creator to be inappropriate and harmful ways to express ourselves sexually. This is the consistent teaching of scripture and has been the unswerving ethical norm of the church universal in all times and in all places.

Seen from this perspective, homosexuality, then, is one of the many signs of disorder in God's creation and of our fallenness before God. Clearly, for those with a homosexual orientation, this is a particularly painful reality. But the Bible lifts up the idea of sexual chastity for those wrestling with same-sex attraction, supported by deep, loving and open friendships within the wider family of God.

For this reason, it is likewise inappropriate and misguided to appoint and ordain people to positions of spiritual leadership in the church who choose to ignore clear and consistent biblical teaching in this area and engage in same-sex practice. This is not to pass judgment on the quality of same-sex relationships. Indeed I have no doubt that many are marked by deep love and care. But the vast majority of Christians believe that same-sex genital relationships remain contrary to God's intention for human life.

Hugh Donnelly

ONE DAY, AS PETER WAS DEEP IN PRAYER, THE SPIRIT INTRUDED. Peter had a vision, and in that vision something like a large sheet was being let down from heaven. On the sheet were all kinds of different animals: cattle, pigs, snakes, birds, lobster. And Peter heard a voice, "Get up, Peter. Eat."

"No way!" said Peter, upset by the suggestion that he eat animals such as these, because some of those animals were unclean, forbidden according to Jewish dietary laws. (Remember, even though he was a follower of Jesus, Peter was still a faithful Jew.) But the Spirit was persistent, and the voice and the vision came to him three times: "Get up, Peter. Bon appetite!"

When Peter awoke from this vision, he heard a knock at his front door. Several people were there waiting to take him to the home of a man named Cornelius, a Gentile, a member of the very army that was opposing Israel at that time.

Peter went, met Cornelius, and was surprised to discover that this was no chance meeting. The Spirit had sent Peter there. And during his short visit, Peter did two things which would forever change the course of church history: he ate with Cornelius and he baptized Cornelius.

Peter came to realize that the vision he saw was not really so much about unclean food as it was about unclean people. "Don't call unclean anything I

have created,” said the voice. Peter was taking a very dangerous step here, because the church had not seen anything like this before.

All the church had ever known was its predictable, Jewish existence in Jerusalem. Peter had jeopardized all of that. Jew was mixing with Gentile. In his defense, Peter told the church leaders about the vision he had seen. “It wasn’t my idea,” he said. “It came as a surprise!”

It was God’s idea that Gentiles should have a place in the kingdom. This was hard for the church to hear. It came as a shock. But sometimes God has to use the shock method with this broken thing we call church.

Such can be the power of the Holy Spirit. Bold, disruptive, unsettling—surprising! The Spirit forced the church to think about God differently, to think about its ministry differently.

Since day one the church has had to deal with surprise after surprise. And the church has had to learn to be surprisingly flexible as the circle of God’s grace has grown wider and wider in newer and newer contexts. If there’s a theme that occurs over and over in scripture—especially in the stories of the life of Jesus—it’s that God challenges our understanding of who’s an insider and who’s an outsider.

Since day one the church has been confronted by issues—big issues—large enough to tear the church apart, but which ended up being opportunities for the church to express faithful discipleship. Such evolutionary moments in the life of the church are difficult, because some of us like to think of the church as a place of stability, a place where change doesn’t happen too often.

But really, if there’s something we can say about the church, it’s that it is definitely not unchangeable. The church is forced to change. It’s been that way since day one. And I’m glad for that. I hear people say that they are opposed to full inclusion of those from the LGBTQ communities because they wish to uphold traditional views of scriptural interpretation, perhaps believing that the mission of the church has been one thing and one thing only.

My response would be that the church is constantly in the process of redefining itself. It’s never been one thing only, permanent, unchangeable. The church has been surprisingly flexible in re-evaluating its mission, its understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. One of the great themes of scripture is God’s holy “Surprise!”

Karla Wübbenhorst

WHY DOES THIS ISSUE MATTER SO MUCH? Clearly it matters to the 10 per cent or so of the church who identify as LGBTQ. But my conviction is that what is at stake is something much more basic than what role in the church this 10 per cent have. This issue goes to what is the deepest, most basic, most personal question we can ask ourselves as Christian believers: do I trust God to know wherein the good of my life is to be found, or shall I insist on self-definition, self-expression, self-rule, and a rearrangement of the world around me to accommodate and affirm what it is I say I want and need and am? Basically the question is: will I be ruled in my Christian life by desire ... by what I want ... or will I be ruled by the vision of what God wants for me?

Now of course there are lots of things that present problems with God for us at the level of basic Christian discipleship. The Bible also says that there’s a sin involved in anger, and in envy and in pride, and in the love of money, and in the love of other people’s spouses even if you’re a heterosexual, and ministers wrestle with all those things, and claim the forgiveness of Christ regularly for all the ways in which their sinful wants lead them astray. But what they don’t do is say: “I want my anger or my pride, or my divorce-for-any-reason, or my adultery affirmed by the church. I want to construct my domestic life around this particular desire that I have, so that I can lean into it and fully explore it.” If they do that, then we depose them.

The New Testament community opened its arms to Gentiles, slaves and women in leadership because it was able to reimagine the social order, having gotten a peek into the future order of the kingdom of God. But what it did not hurry and rejoice to include was any practice it continued to regard as sin (and Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 1 leave us in no doubt that homosexual practice was in that category). Here’s a news flash: being a woman is not a sin! Faith and repentance for sin were the things which distinguished righteous Gentiles like Cornelius “who fear[ed] the Lord and [did] what was right,” from those who remained unwashed children of >



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In a way this whole
debate is about
the nature of grace.
What is our vision
of a gracious
Christian
community?

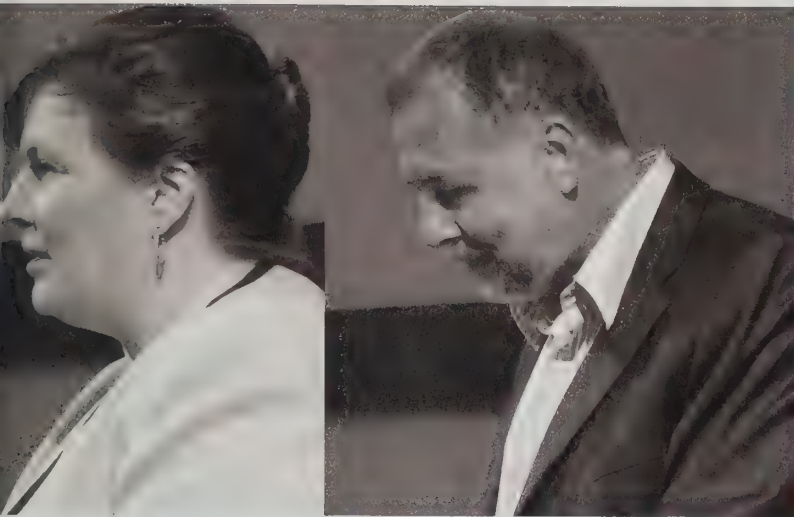
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the Gentile world, with its paganism, its sexual permissiveness, and its ultimate consignment to the fate of all that is not grafted into the life-giving olive tree. Basic Christian discipleship (let alone leadership in the church) always requires that we choose which we love more, Jesus or our sin.

The advocates of so called “full inclusion” do have a vision of the church. It is of the church as a place of grace. If you’ve read the overtures of the presbyteries of East Toronto and Calgary-Macleod they make an appeal to grace. In a way this whole debate is about the nature of grace. What is our vision of a gracious Christian community? It is one where we agree not to ask the hard questions to one another, not to wrestle with God and with scripture, or at least not in those private areas where they challenge us personally, not to really believe in the power of the gospel to touch and transform the deepest areas of our brokenness, but simply to accommodate to sin and expect no better of ourselves or the God we worship? I don’t want a church community like that.

Wes Denyer

FOR THE LONGEST TIME I BELIEVED AND PREACHED what many of us did 30 years ago: to love the sinner, hate the sin; that living a gay lifestyle is sinful, but we’re all sinners who fall short of the glory of God; it’s okay to have a homosexual orientation, but you need to remain celibate your whole life; it’s even possible that homosexuals can be “cured” with aversion therapy—psychological treatment and Christian counselling may be able to help them live a “normal” life.



THE SPEAKERS *from left to right:* Clyde Ervine, Kevin Livingston, Hugh Donnelly, Karla Wübbenhorst and Wes Denyer.

I no longer believe any of that. Some people are simply not created heterosexual. Through no volitional choice of their own, they are born gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. I believe God loves them just as much as God loves any other person. And I have also come to believe the God who lives in the fullness and intimacy of the Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—intends for them the fullness of an intimate lifelong relationship of committed love and companionship.

Let me reference two defining statements which we as Presbyterians and as reformed Christians hold to be true. From *Living Faith*: “The writing of the Bible was conditioned by the language, thought and setting of its time. The Bible must be read in its historical context.” And from our Service of Ordination for ruling and teaching elders: “And such doctrine as the Church, in obedience to Scripture, and under the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, may yet confess in the Church’s continuing function of reformulating the faith.”

As Presbyterians, we do not believe in scripture as the literal and inerrant word of God. We believe scripture was inspired by God, but written by human beings who were, just as much as we are, limited by our psychological, sociological, cultural and historical circumstances.


Scripture is the best “word” we have in trying to understand the will of God for us, but it is not inerrant, and we should not limit God to the words of scripture.

In other words, is it possible, as we gain knowledge and insight, as our vision of humanity is expanded and as the circumstances of the world change ... that we may be able to see more clearly the nature of the God who called us into existence?

I believe God is the same yesterday, today and forever, but is it possible our ability to understand who God is, and what God requires of us, may change, develop and grow?

We learn and we grow, we understand our world and its people in new ways, allowing us to live with greater compassion and justice, with more freedom and opportunities for all. We set God free from our old and limited prejudices, narrow-minded thinking, intolerance, racism and hatred.

God doesn’t change... but we can!

And of course, as Presbyterians, that is exactly what we’ve done... time and time and time again. 

Please go to presbyterianrecord.ca to find links to the videos and complete texts for the four talks on sexuality mentioned in this article.

The complete text of Rev. Ervine’s speech on respect will appear later this year in the Record.

The event was sponsored and organized by the Presbytery of Hamilton, which deserves congratulations for creating a rich resource for Presbyterians to study and discuss.

FROM THE MODERATOR

Clergy Burn Out

Many ministers struggle to keep afloat. *by* **KAREN HORST**



I had the great privilege in February to spend considerable time with key church leaders from a variety of denominations. A number of us met at Matanzas Theological Seminary in Cuba to discuss the trends happening in a variety of countries, and how several reformed churches that are a part of the World Communion of Reformed Churches are responding. Specifically, we addressed gender issues and the ways economics, racism and politics affect equality. As Christians, we still have plenty of work to do to help the most vulnerable in our countries.

At a different event hosted by the Canadian Council of Churches, we identified many key challenges. Many are struggling with similar fundamental issues such as human sexuality, assisted death and institutional organization. One glaring reality that became apparent is the alarming number of clergy and church leaders who are feeling numb or burned out. We discovered the same at our conference in Cuba.

More than 20,000 clergy left the ministry in 2010 alone in the U.S., and according to a survey done by the Francis Schaeffer Institute, 71 per cent of pastors serving churches today are burned out and battling depression and fatigue. The same survey discovered that 48 per cent would leave their churches today if they could get other jobs. The statistics are similar here in Canada. (For further material see the Alban Institute's work on clergy burn-

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could get other jobs

out and previous articles in the *Presbyterian Record*.) Certainly, in my travels throughout the church, I am discovering clergy who are faithful, devoted Christians and yet they are struggling to keep their heads above water.

There are several contributing factors. The church is rapidly changing and many congregations are declining. In such a climate, the already mixed expectations that clergy experience are intensified. At times the theology of the pastor can be quite different to the

majority of the people in his/her congregation and many struggle with the internal tug-of-war between integrity and keeping the peace. Congregations will often see their clergy as hired to do their Christian work. Reasonability is often missing in church debates and often people do not separate their ideology from their identity. Many pastors will also recognize their own complicity in burnout as they work unreasonable hours that are self-imposed.

It is important to recognize that clergy, national staff and church professionals are human beings with limitations, weaknesses and needs.

This Lent, spend time praying for your pastor and church leaders. Honestly struggle together to examine different ways to get all the work done. Take the time to say thank you. Give helpful feedback after you have examined whether your concern is in your own self-interest or for the greater good. Perhaps most important of all, use Lent to examine your own calling and how God wants you to use your gifts.

The Apostle Paul outlines beautifully in 1 Corinthians 12 that the work of ministry is shared by all of us and the whole body suffers when we do not share our unique gifts. Seek God's Spirit this Lent and explore how God would have you support the body of Christ and every member within it. +

Rev. Karen Horst is minister at St. Andrew's, Orillia, Ont.

People & Places

Find more online at presbyterianrecord.ca

Photographs can be uploaded at presbyterianrecord.ca.



KNOX, WATERLOO, ONT.

In October 2015, Knox, Waterloo, hosted an afternoon of music and prayer that raised almost \$2,500 for Syrian refugee relief through Presbyterian World Service & Development. Inshallah, a choir supported by Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, performed under the leadership of Debbie Lou Ludolph, the director of the seminary's Kanata Centre for Worship and Global Song.



KNOX, ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

Knox, St. Catharines, got on board with a local anti-bullying campaign during their service on Dec. 6, 2015. After telling a story written by a man who was bullied as a kid, Rev. Dr. Clyde Ervine asked the children to deliver a "Bullying: Just Stop It" card to everyone in the church. Knox's anti-bullying efforts were spurred by the Niagara IceDogs Hockey Club, which is leading the campaign and encouraging other organizations in Niagara to get involved.



PRESBYTERY OF PICKERING, ONT.

Indigenous leaders and representatives from nine denominations gathered together in November 2015 to set objectives and plan ecumenical responses to the Calls to Action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The gathering, which was called "Peoples of Faith Moving Forward in Reconciliation," produced 14 proposals for joint action by the churches.

THE OTHER SIX DAYS

Silliness and Sweet Miracles

Our world is an interesting place. *by* **BRADLEY CHILDS**

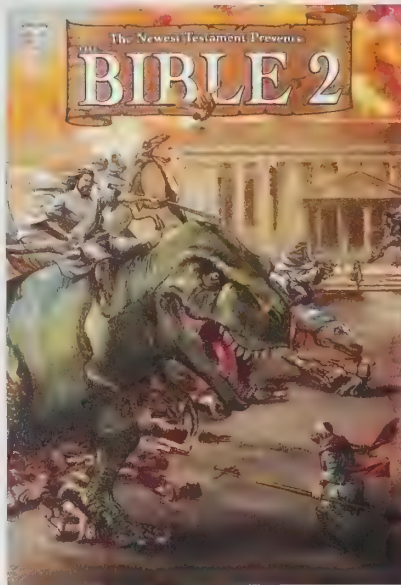
A NEW RELIGION

The Missionary Church of Kopimism is a Swedish-founded and recognized religion. Its core beliefs have to do with the distribution of information. According to their website, “Code is law,” “the internet is sacred” and “copying information is a sacred virtue.” The symbols of the church include a slanted, block-based 3D letter “K” and a yin-yang symbol with Ctrl+C (computer speak for “Cut”) on one side and Ctrl+V (computer speak for “Paste”) on the other. Referring to themselves as Kopimists, followers of this philosophy encourage adherents to copy all types of files, from movies to webpages to TV shows and share them wherever they can. While the group has been around since 2010, they just celebrated their first wedding service. It was officiated by an individual wearing the now very famous Guy Fawkes mask as a computer read the vows aloud.

FIND IT @ kopimistsamfundet.se/english

CHRISTIAN MUSIC

I’m sort of out of my element with this one. This music is almost... adult contemporary. Don’t judge me. I stumbled across this little gem whilst viewing heavy metal remakes of Adele’s *Hello*. Released in January, Noel Robinson put out an album titled *Outrageous Love* (though the title track came out in September). Robinson is British and comes from a Pentecostal background. Clearly



Joke Bible

he has some gospel and R&B influences in his work but personally when I hear it, all I can think of is Motown and I mean that as a great compliment. If you’re interested, the song *Rain* is worth a listen.

FIND IT @ noelrobinson.com

A JOKE BIBLE

Now trust me, I am not endorsing this one. This thing is vulgar and tasteless. At first glance it comes off comical. *The Newest Testament Presents the Bible 2* (a collection of four comics) has on its cover Jesus riding a T-Rex, brandishing a sword and leading a revolt against the Romans who have stopped at nothing to kill him post-resurrection. Apparently there is some time-travel involved and

some secret plots by the papacy and French monarchy in the 1400s. Oh, and Jesus also has rocket sandals that allow him to perform powerful flying superman punches. All that is pretty awesome, if you ask me. But like I said, I can’t endorse it. It goes way too far. And it’s certainly not my kind of humour, which is to say that I appreciate a good inside joke where Christians admit that we take (not God but) ourselves way too seriously. In this case though, it seems pretty insulting. Still, take a quick look. There is some comic relief in the cover. I just wouldn’t go ordering a copy or opening it up.

FIND IT @ trepidationcomics.storenvy.com/products/1080711-bible-2-trade-paperback **Editor’s note: Site contains profane language.*

A BEAUTIFUL STORY

The story comes from CNN. The photo: famously dubbed “the rescuing hug.” The time: 21 years ago. The event: twins born 12 weeks premature. But there was a big problem. One of the twins wasn’t going to make it. I don’t want to ruin the story. If you want to know what happened or how a simple hug changed the way we practice medicine, then you will just have to watch the clip.

FIND IT @ [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com). Search for “The hug that helped change medicine.” 

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.

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Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

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Minister who is able to work with all ages, connect with young families, strong communicator and teacher of the Christian faith; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Roland DeVries; 514-288-5256 extension 209; rdevries@presbyteriancollege.ca; profile at www.briarwoodpresbyterianchurch.ca.

Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

Ashburn, Burns; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Andrew Allison, PO Box 104, Leaskdale ON L0C 1C0; 905-852-5921; a.allison@saintpauls.ca.

Campbellford, St. Andrew's and Burnbrae, St. Andrew's; Full-time minister, two-point charge; start date September 1, 2016;

Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Douglas Brown; 132 Northshore Rd, Grafton ON K0K 2G0; chloe@eagle.ca; 905-349-3198.

Guelph, Duff's; Seeking a forward-thinking full-time minister to provide strong leadership, preach to the practicalities and encourage new forms of worship, music and ministry; Interim Moderator Rev. Bill Bynum, c/o Duff's Presbyterian Church, 319 Brock St. S., Guelph ON N1H 6H9; congregation's profile available on church's website, the Ministry & Church Vocations website and from the Interim Moderator.

Palmerston, Knox; Full-time new grad or ¾-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Kathy Morden, PO Box 8, Neustadt ON N0G 2M0; 519-321-1942; kcpc-revkathy@wightman.ca.
Streetsville (Mississauga), St. Andrew's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Gale Macdonald, 1338 Clarkson Rd. N., Mississauga, ON L5J 2W5; 905-822-8911; revgalemacdonald@gmail.com.

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Ancaster, St. Andrew's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Anne Yee-Hibbs;

35 Giffin Rd., Dundas, ON L9N 7N5; 905-627-9080; ayhibbs@gmail.com.

Bayfield, Knox; Part-time; Interim Moderator Rev. John Henderson, PO Box 824, Exeter, ON N0M 1S6; 519-235-2608; henderson.johncharles@gmail.com.

Fingal, Knox; Half-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Ed Hoekstra, 970 Oxford St. W., London, ON N6H 1V4; 519-471-2290 extension 222; ehoekstra@oakridge.london.on.ca.

Port Dover, Knox; Part-time, 60%; Interim Moderator Rev. Bob Sim, 145 Hawkswood Trail, Hamilton ON L9B 2R5; 905-921-5667; revbobsim@gmail.com.

Simcoe, St. Paul's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Stanley Cox, 65 Tan Ave., Waterford, ON N0E 1Y0; 519-443-4798; stan.cox@sympatico.ca; sppc@kwic.com; visit website stpaulssimcoe.com.

Tiverton, Knox and Glammis, St. Paul's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Owen Kim, Box 526 19 Brownlee St. S., Teeswater, ON N0G 2S0; 519-392-6955; maplemission@gmail.com.

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Please Contact:
The Rev. Dr. Stan Cox,
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(*Living Faith 8.3.2*) when we hold forth new life in Christ (*2 Cor. 5:17*),
and support one another on our journey into full and joyful obedience.
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and respect (*1 Peter 3:15*), amid a culture of confusion and pressure.



www.psalt.info

Obituaries



Barber, Reverend William M., passed away peacefully at Spruce Lodge in Stratford, Ont., on Sunday, January 17, 2016 in his 89th year.

Loving husband of Laura Barber (née Urquhart) for 55 years; dear father of Neil and Marie Mitchell of Walton, Ont., and son Daryl; proud Grandpa Bill to Emily, Sean, Sarah and Claire Mitchell. Also survived by nieces and nephews Bob and Sharon Matthews, Grant Matthews (Durham, Ont.), Dr. June Matthews and Ibrahim Moharram (London, Ont.), Gerald and Mary Golem (Chesley, Ont.) and their families as well as sisters-in-law Leila Kjarside (Vancouver B.C.), Eileen Urquhart (Moose Creek, Ont.), Violet Urquhart (Cornwall, Ont.) and their families. Predeceased by parents Harold and Charlotte (Porter) Barber, brother-in-law and sister Art and Islay Matthews, nephew Keith Matthews, brothers-and-sisters-in-law Donald Urquhart, Wilmer and Mary Urquhart, Christina Hanna, Kris Kjarside and Allan Urquhart.

Bill was born in Normanby Township in Grey County, Ont., in 1927. In the late 1950s he left the family farm and pursued an education, as he felt called to the ministry. He graduated from Presbyterian College in Montreal in 1966. Bill served his ordained missionary appointment in Melfort, Sask. He also served in St. Andrew's and Southminster in Brandon, Man., and Knox in Lloydminster, Alta. Returning to Ontario in 1984 Bill served in First Seaforth, St. Andrew's, Clinton, and Livingston Presbyterian, Braden, before retiring to Bayfield where he provided supply at Knox for seven years.

The funeral service was held at Knox Presbyterian Church, Cranbrook, on Thursday, January 21st (spring interment at Maplewood Cemetery near Durham). Memorial donations to Ronald McDonald House of Southwestern Ontario or Evangel Hall Mission would be greatly appreciated. Messages of condolence for the Barber and Mitchell families may be sent to falconerfuneralhomes.com.



Herbison, Rev. Donald James, a respected member and retired minister of visitation of Knox Presbyterian Church,

Dundas, Ont., died August 17, 2015. Don served God in a most sincere, faithful and devoted manner over the years in Sutton, Erin and Ospringe, Erskine, Hamilton, and Knox, Dundas, as well as clerk of presbytery for 35 years in the Brampton and Hamilton areas.

Don was a loving husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather. "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Kelman, Carolyn Anne, faithful member and elder of Knox Presbyterian Church, Dundas, Ont., died November 16, 2015. A kind, caring lady of deep faith who served God with humility and grace.

Pearce, John French, died peacefully in his 101st year in Guelph, Ont. As a member of Rockwood Presbyterian Church, John served as Sunday school superintendent, clerk of session and representative elder to presbytery. After retirement, John and his wife Myra attended Knox Presbyterian Church in Goderich. When they returned to Guelph in 1990, St. Andrew's became their home church.

With an easy laugh and a quick smile, John would light up a room with his charm and wit. As a humble man of faith, character and integrity, he was a sterling example. His light will shine in the memories of all who knew him. ☙

FOR THE JOURNEY

Pierre's Birch Bark Canoe

Find a vehicle of simplicity.

by DAVID WEBBER

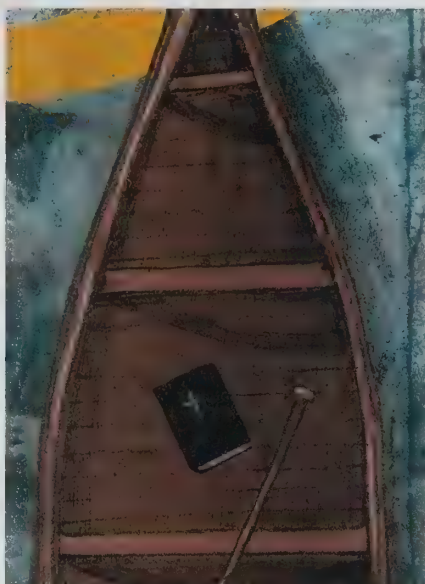
DAVID, THEY ARE CALLING FOR OUR FLIGHT. Come on!" The urgency in Linda's voice was palpable, as was her frustration with me. Linda needs to be the first on board; I like to squeak on just as the gangplank is being raised.

"Just a minute, Linda. Don't you know what this is? This is Pierre's birch bark canoe."

"Quit drooling and take a picture already. We need to get down to our gate and get on board." Linda was towing me down the airport terminal as she scolded me.

"But, but, but, I remember seeing pictures of Pierre Trudeau in the mid-70s wearing jeans and a T-shirt and paddling that canoe, Linda. Oh man, what an ending to an amazing cross-Canada trip."

And it had been an amazing trip; something good for our Canadian souls. We had been to Newfoundland for a week where we had toured as many of the outposts as we could in that limited time. We had been blessed by the amazing storytelling people of the Rock, though all the while God tried to blow us off of it with autumn gales and deluges. We actually believed one of the local characters who told us a story about the weather we were experiencing being totally out of character for Newfoundland, which usually had a maritime climate as mild as Vancouver Island. (We had no idea we were being told a "serious" story until the following December when a



General Assembly Moderator was our guest at Lac la Hache and was texting his wife on the other side of the country in St John's, Newfoundland. He was greatly concerned about a five-foot snowfall and gale force winds that had her house-bound. "All par for the course for us Newfies," he said. I advised him he needed to preach some sermons on the Ninth Commandment as his

people obviously had some serious storytellers among them.) At any rate, after our own windy Newfoundland adventure we had boarded a plane and ended up with a short layover in the Canadian capital where I had stumbled on Pierre's birch bark canoe on display in the Ottawa International Airport.

The subsequent flight from Ottawa to Calgary was about four hours long and it gave me ample time to contemplate why Pierre's birch bark canoe was so significant to me. It was partly because the birch bark canoe is a Canadian icon and historically entwined with our story as a land and as a people from indigenous times. It was partly because the birch bark canoe is the direct forerunner of the cedar canvas canoe, which is my favourite craft for anything you can possibly do on the water. But mostly it was because the birch bark canoe, and its successor the cedar canvas canoe, had allowed me to finally penetrate something of the aloof intellect and seemingly arrogant character of a man that had so puzzled me and yet had influenced Canadian history perhaps more than any other. ➤



FOR THE JOURNEY, continued

I started being politically engaged when Pierre Elliot Trudeau became prime minister in 1968. I understood the man even less than I understood myself, and yet I voted for him time after time until he took a fateful walk in the snow in 1984. It wasn't until 10 years later that I finally understood something about the man, at least on one level. That year, thanks to Terrance and Brian McKenna et al, the documentary *Memoirs* was released. It contained footage of a somewhat grizzled Trudeau, dressed in a buckskin jacket and paddling a cedar canvas canoe. Seeing the footage of his expert solo paddling and learning that he was a devoted paddler most of his life revealed much. To me, the rest of the documentary was far less revealing about the man than that single bit of footage.

It was some time later that I discovered for myself the famous essay written by a young Trudeau after a canoe trip of about 1,000 miles from Montreal to Hudson's Bay. Originally published in French in *Jeunesse Etudiante Catholique* (1944) and much later in English in *Wilderness Canada* (1970) and titled, "Exhaustion and Fulfillment: The Ascetic in a Canoe," Trudeau wrote about the significance of canoe tripping: "For it is a condition of such a trip that you entrust yourself, stripped of your worldly goods, to nature. Canoe and paddle, blanket and knife, salt pork and flour, fishing rod and rifle; that is about the extent of your wealth. To remove all the useless material baggage from a man's heritage is, at the same time, to free his mind from petty preoccupations, calculations and memories." Trudeau goes on to say that on such a canoe trip one will discover great resources from within oneself, and then continues with this statement that connects with me, though a much less experienced fellow paddler: "Nevertheless,

he will have returned a more ardent believer from a time when religion, like everything else, became simple. The impossibility of scandal creates a new morality, and prayer becomes a friendly chiding of the divinity, who has again become part of our everyday affairs."

I get it; and I get it most profoundly on my knees in a canoe with a paddle in my hands, there being little room for much else that works in a canoe on a wilderness river or lake. I get it; that that kind of efficacious, mind-blowing, spiritually revolutionizing and physically revitalizing faith flows out of simplicity, whether forced or intentional, and it changes everything; no, that's not right, it has the power to transform every part of me. That kind of faith and prayer flows like a river out of simplicity. Simplicity is about letting go of what the Quakers called "cumber." It is about intentionally becoming unencumbered physically, mentally and spiritually. I believe it was what our Lord was meaning when he taught his disciples to "seek first the kingdom" and "sufficient are the troubles of the day" and encouraged them to live simply, one day at a time (Matthew 6:33-34). And Jesus promised the rewards would be great.

But some of us, at least I do, need a vehicle or method for simplicity and discovering the profound spiritual fruits promised. One of mine is kneeling for long periods of time paddling a canoe. Others include spiritual retreats, etc. What is yours? Whatever it is, as the ice comes off with the Easter warmth, I encourage you as I encourage myself, to get it launched. ☩

Rev. David Webber, now retired, was the founding missionary in B.C.'s Cariboo ministry. His most recent book, When the Aspen Flowers, can be ordered through webberink@telus.net.




Last November, St. Mark's, Don Mills, Toronto, welcomed two-dozen new members

by profession of faith, baptism and transfer of membership. The once homogenous Toronto neighbourhood has become vastly diverse. The congregation at St. Mark's has been working on and practicing intentional hospitality to be a welcoming space for all.

'They will come from east and west, north and south and sit at the table in the kingdom of God,' reflects a reality here in Canada within our churches that is unprecedented in Christendom.

Pictured from left to right are, Kevin and Rachel Chan, Alison Williams, Jekkalin, Jazel and Felinita de la Paz, Meredith and Elizabeth Copeland, Marion Houser, Julie and Kay Hogg, Craig and Marjorie Copeland, Rev. Dr. Harris Athanasiadis, Elizabeth Marquez and Winsome Davis. Missing from the picture are: Jessie Laing, David, Wilma and Ariel-Wales Mbah, Anna Marquez-Ruiz, Shawn Ramsingh, Jamir de la Paz and Hannah Chan.



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THE Encouragement Tour

Fred Stewart travels the country
listening to ministers.



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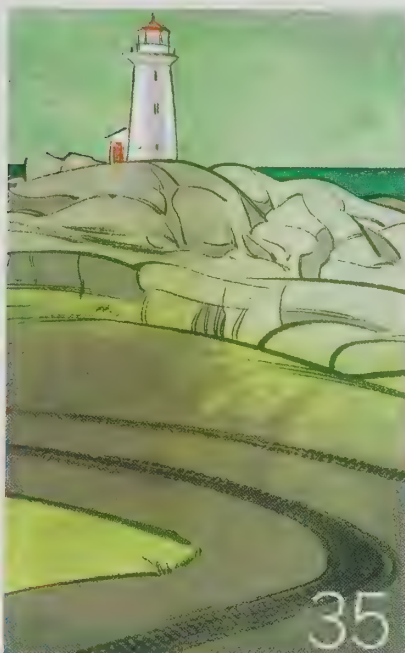


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APRIL 2016



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We are, quite frankly,
at a loss as to what to
do to retain readers.
To keep you as readers
and subscribers,
not to put too fine
a point on it.

FOR THE RECORD

What Do You Want?

It's time to give the *Record* your wish list. *by* DAVID HARRIS

What do you want to read in this magazine? This is not a trivial question I'm asking. We really want to know what we could do better. Because while we received just the usual handful of complaints last year, 2,047 readers did not renew their subscriptions. That's a decline of 15 per cent.

Of those, 1,626 were in seven congregations that did not renew the Every Home Plan.

The reason cited every time is a vote by the session related to the budget.

The further problem is that the former subscribers in those congregations are offered another year at the reduced rate, but they are not taking up the offer. Why?

As a publisher, we're not alone in asking this question.

Recent years have not been kind to anyone in media in North America and this year has started off miserably.

Near the end of January, Rogers Media, publishers of *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine*, announced cuts of 200 jobs.

Also in January, Montreal's *La Presse* newspaper stopped publishing weekday print editions of the newspaper and cut 160 newsroom and circulation jobs.

The *Toronto Star*, the largest single newspaper in the country by circulation also announced newsroom cuts, including some that were digitally focused, and the closure of its printing plant just outside the city, along with almost 300 jobs.

Around the same time, Postmedia, the largest newspaper group in the country and owners of the *National Post*

announced it was combining several newsrooms, eliminating 90 jobs.

But back to the *Record*. We are, quite frankly, at a loss as to what to do to retain readers. To keep *you* as readers and subscribers, not to put too fine a point on it.


We do our best to represent the broad spectrum of Presbyterian perspectives through both regular columns and stories. This month's cover about the work of Fred Stewart, the executive director of the Renewal Fellowship, is no exception. Fred is also a monthly columnist in the magazine, as was his predecessor, Calvin Brown.

Our own Amy MacLachlan had a column last year aimed at those intrigued by the new monastic movement. And we have everything in between. We strive for gender, age, cultural and geographic balance.

And we work hard at creating a beautiful, easy-to-read magazine.

So what can we do better or differently? Send me an email, please to editor@presbyterianrecord.ca.

We're also going to be conducting a brief online survey of all the clergy and clerks of session across the country to ask them what they think and why they do or do not subscribe.

So talk to your minister or clerk. We genuinely want to know. Because we cannot continue to publish if our readers stop reading. And we very much want to keep this magazine around for many more years. 

David Harris is the Record's publisher and editor.

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

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Contributors



KATIE MUNNIK is a peripatetic Presbyterian writer, currently living in Cardiff, U.K., with her spouse and three children. In May 2010, she started writing *The Messy Table* which appears every Monday on the *Record* website. Her new column *Kaleidoscopically* launched in the January issue of the magazine. Katie rides a yellow bicycle.



AMY MACLACHLAN has been part of the *Record* team for nearly 13 years and is now the managing editor. She has a Bachelor of Journalism from Carleton University—something she pursued after her dream of being a racehorse trainer didn't pan out. She is married to a teacher and they have two girls. Amy will be on a three-month sabbatical beginning this month, during which she plans to bake bread, practice downward dog and eat chocolate-covered almonds.

BARRY FALLS has been working on the illustrations for David Webber's *For the Journey* column for about eight years. During that time he got married, bought a house and has been blessed with two beautiful boys. He loves working on illustrations for the *Record* because Webber's column often focuses on the natural world, and Barry has always loved drawing animals.



Munnik photo courtesy of Katie Munnik. Barry Falls photo by Catherine Falls.

Letters



Write to us: LETTERS@PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA

Beautiful Sabbath

Re A Little Guarded, March

May I encourage you to take a few steps back and review your reaction to the lack of welcome that you received on your holiday. Throughout your article, there are several points that do not rise to the level of "charity," i.e. "love" we espouse for one another. I am certain God is looking at your heart (and

not your skin colour) but our scriptures embody and espouse a higher reverence for the Sabbath than your physical demeanor. Abraham Joshua Heschel reminds us: "The seventh day sings. An old allegory asserts: 'When Adam saw the majesty of the Sabbath, its greatness and glory, and the joy it conferred upon all beings, he intoned a song of praise for the Sabbath day as if to give thanks

to the Sabbath day. Then God said to him: 'Thou singest a song of praise to the Sabbath day, and singest none to Me, the God of the Sabbath? Thereupon the Sabbath rose from its seat, and prostrated herself before God, saying: It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord. And the whole of creation added: And to sing praise unto Thy Name, O Most High.'"

You see, God vested the day of rest with beauty. Rejection is in no place mentioned.

ROBERT F. FLINDALL
PETERBOROUGH, ONT.

Shared Vision Required

Re Green Fields, February

What we need in the Presbyterian Church in Canada is a complete transformation of polity infrastructure that will encourage bona fide church plants from the very top on down. And it absolutely needs to start with a shared vision of placing priority on being missional.

JOHN PAENG, ONLINE

Mysterious Memorials

Re Poetry, Hymns, War, February

Kudos to Tess Bridgewater for her story on graveyard history. Having

Pastor Shep



www.pastorshep.ca

©Susan Mattinson

spent much of my life in cemeteries, at one time being an authority on tombstone architecture, I identified with the gems from history located in them.

Well do I recall one in St. Mary's, Ont., southwest of Stratford. I came across the grave of a man who drowned when the Titanic went down in 1912. How someone from that faraway tragedy ended up there is the kind of mystery rivaling the memorial in St. Andrew's Fergus, for Robert McGillivray who died February 30, 1854.

Believe me, he's not the only one whose death or burial was incorrect. I officiated at an interment outside of Pugwash, N.S., on the wrong day because the epitaph had already been carved in the granite.

ROB LAMB, KEEWATIN, ONT.

Ms. Bridgewater's article concentrated on several of the older congregations in the Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington and she conducted a fair amount of research. However, the name of one of the congregations she mentioned in downtown Galt was surely recorded in her sources as Knox's, with an apostrophe "s."

After all, it's right there above the huge wooden doors, carved in stone: Knox's Presbyterian Church.

LIZ DUDGEON-RECKERS,
CAMBRIDGE, ONT.

Hurrah for Women Ministers

Re Shouting for More, January

The article was interesting and controversial. We have a woman minister in our church in Mississauga, Ont. She is a wonderful minister who has performed baptisms, services at two retirement homes, has good sermons and makes home visits to her community and many more tasks. We are really proud of her as she makes a point of talking to all the people at fellowship

time. She has a family and has raised them well. I would like to say, hurrah for women ministers! May there be more of them.

We need more positive signs that women can indeed take on the important function and role of heading the church.

MARION DA SILVA, VIA EMAIL

Beautiful Geddie

Re The Ministry of Camp, February

I was pleased to see camp data, which helps anyone interested in certain ones. May I suggest a special on certain camps; for example, Camp Geddie celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2016, and the special emotions aroused by a song born at a 1947 Presbyterian Young People's Society camp. The song is "Geddie, Beautiful Geddie." Campers sing this annually.

ROBERT A. B. MACLEAN, ONLINE

Correction: There was a mix-up of three obituaries in our March issue. The memorials of John French Pearce, Rev. William M. Barber and Rev. Donald James Herbison, respectively, were all affected. We sincerely apologize for the error. Please see the obituaries on page 46 for an updated listing. ➤

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POP CHRISTIANITY

What We're Really Talking About

When we talk about human sexuality. *by* **ANDREW FAIZ**

Getting almost the last word at the Presbytery of Hamilton's Speaking Truth in Love conference on human sexuality on January 31, Rev. Dr. Clyde Ervine said: "This is about more than sex. This is about: What is God? What is God's character? What is sin? It affects our doctrine of God. It affects our doctrine of sin. It affects our doctrine of scripture. It affects our doctrine of the church. It begins to mount."

He's right, of course, and that might explain why about 300 people were at Chedoke Church, with another 100 or more watching online. Sitting in the sanctuary, mesmerized by the speakers, thoughts similar to what Ervine would express passed through my mind. I was struck by how each person read the Bible, what tools they engaged, how they interacted with tradition and history, how they expressed their relationship with God through Christ. It was good learning.

A lot of doctrinal stuff is unearthed through the issue of sexuality, including how we read the Bible and how we also "read" the world around us. (The fancy names for those are hermeneutics and exegesis.)

I've since learned that other presbyteries are using the videos from Hamilton to have their own study days, along with many congregations and presbyteries who are using the study guide prepared by the national church.



Would hundreds, thousands, of people be equally engaged in doctrinal issues if not for the primary issue of sexuality?

That's hundreds, thousands, of people talking about sexuality, and through that actively thinking about doctrinal issues. (With more online engaged in heated, at times bitter, conversations.)


Still, there was one other thought nagging at the back of my brain: Would hundreds, thousands, of people be equally engaged in doctrinal issues if not for the primary issue of sexuality?

Not to negate what Ervine said, or what happened during that day, and not to forget that thousands of us have

also been deeply involved in sponsoring refugees, but ... do you think we could overflow a parking lot if the conversation was about, let's say, mission, or the importance of Christ in our lives, or mental, physical, emotional, spiritual health of clergy, or of laity, or ...?

Human sexuality is a very important conversation for us to have—and, as a quick aside, we're having it without listening to the voices of gay and lesbian Presbyterians—but, it is not the only very important conversation in our church right now.

My prayer is we don't waste this opportunity as we delve into doctrinal issues to realize that as ideas and concepts mount we embrace them all and discern faithfully. My prayer is we come out of this process—and this is a marathon not a sprint—with a richer and deeper sense of what it is we believe, and how we need to act through our faith. I pray we develop a closer relationship with Jesus and share that passion with the world around us.

Sexuality is ultimately about relationships. And that is what we're working through—how we have a deeper relationship with the communities outside our churches, with each other within the congregation and with Christ in our hearts. If we don't meet that larger challenge, we will be wasting our time. 

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

BULLETIN

Community and World News

LGBT

‘We’re Not There Yet’

Life and Mission Agency to ask Assembly for more time on LGBT overtures.

by **CONNIE WARDLE**

A draft report from Justice Ministries on the topic of human sexuality needs more work and will not come to the General Assembly this year, the Life and Mission Agency decided at its March meeting. The report was written as a response to more than a dozen overtures referred to the department by presbyteries and sessions.

The LMA committee oversees the work of seven national church departments and approves their reports to the General Assembly each year.

A total of 23 overtures and one memorial on human sexuality were submitted to the assembly last year. Some overtures urged the church to change its current stance and allow lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans >

LGBT, continued

persons in monogamous relationships to be married in Presbyterian churches and ordained as ministers, while others asked for a reaffirmation of the church's 1994 Statement on Human Sexuality, which considers homosexual intercourse a departure from God's created order and urges homosexual Christians to live in chastity. Other overtures asked for strategies and safe spaces so those in the courts of the church could engage in honest dialogue and listening.

The overtures were referred to Justice Ministries and/or the Committee on Church Doctrine.

"This is intended as a first step," Stephen Allen, associate secretary of Justice Ministries, said of the seven-page report presented to the LMA.

The report provided some theological context and steps that could eventually allow—but not require—churches and presbyteries to conduct weddings and ordinations for people in same-sex relationships, while affirming "freedom of conscience and action" for individuals and courts that hold traditional views on homosexuality and marriage.

Some committee members spoke favourably of the report and voted for it to be presented to the assembly in June, but others raised concerns about the extent to which Justice Ministries and the Church Doctrine committee had been able to consult with each other. Although the two groups shared responses to the jointly produced *Body, Mind and Soul* study guide and shared drafts of their reports, they had not been able to meet together.

Others suggested the report was incomplete because it did not respond to all of the overtures, and did not overtly mention the feedback received from individuals and church groups.

"Han-Ca translated the [*Body, Mind and Soul*] document and a report is coming," said Rev. Alfred Lee from the Presbytery of Western Han-Ca. "If you send the documents without feedback it will bring the revolt from some areas. ... Chinese and ethnic oriented congregations, we're not there yet. I urge people to understand. Let's study about it. We are *ecclesia*, we need to embrace, go along, but we're not there yet."

The motion to refer the report back to the department for more work passed with a slim majority.

Aubrey Hawton, an elder on the committee, fought back tears following the decision. "As a gay man, it's been frustrating," he said. "I waited and waited to be able to be married in the church I call home, but I couldn't because I didn't want to marry a woman." Finally he and his partner gave up waiting and got married elsewhere. "I'm tired of it being 'us and them,'" he said. "I'm tired of being a 'them.' I'm as much an 'us' as any of you sitting in this room are."

The committee decided a summary of responses to the study guide would be submitted to the General Assembly this year as a supplementary report.

"Congregations have worked hard to meet their deadlines," said Rev. Lara Scholey. "Even though we haven't met ours we should give them something as evidence that they are being heard." +

Connie Wardle is the Record's senior writer. Visit our website for more from the LMA committee meeting.

PWS&D SIGNS FUNDING AGREEMENT

Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada and Presbyterian World Service & Development officially signed an agreement on March 10 that will inject over \$4 million in government funding into the church agency's work in the

areas of maternal, newborn and child health in Malawi and Afghanistan.

The program will "build on the strengths" of the previous one, which received \$1.5 million in government funding, Karen Bokma, communications coordinator for PWS&D told the *Record* in an email.

PWS&D's work in Laghman, Afghanistan, and in three regions of Malawi seeks not only to improve the quality and availability of health services, but to educate women and men on sexual and reproductive health, and address some of the pressures that prevent women from accessing health care services.

In the new program, "there is a greater focus being placed on address-

ing adolescent reproductive health and rights," Bokma said. "An increase in construction and renovation of maternity units in hospitals and clinics is addressing a rise in community demand for services, which was created through the previous project."

On the ground, PWS&D partner Community World Service—Asia will coordinate the project in Afghanistan, while Mulanje Mission Hospital and the Livingstonia Synod Heath Department (through the Embangweni Mission Hospital) will implement it in Malawi.

The government-supported project has a total cost of \$4.8 million, of which PWS&D will provide about \$800,000.

+ —CW



Rev. Alan Goh (left), Gerry and Gayle Clarke (front), and Matthew Loo's family: his father William, sister, Megan and Matthew's mom, Doris.

Sutton Church Wins Matthew Loo Award

A SMALL CHURCH WAS HONOURED in March for the community meal it has served for the last 10 years. St. Andrew's, Sutton, Ont., was presented with the Matthew Loo award at Celebration Church in Markham, Ont., on March 6, along with a cheque to help ensure the outreach continues.

"Sutton PC was chosen because of their inspiring and outstanding example of what it means to love and care for others in Jesus' name," Rev. Alan Goh, minister at Celebration, told the *Record*.

St. Andrew's, a congregation of about 20 people, serves a weekly dinner that regularly attracts 70 people from the community who often have too little to eat and too little support. For many of them, the Tuesday dinner is church.

"We were certainly honoured by this presentation," said Gayle Clarke, an elder and meal committee member at St. Andrew's.

The award is named for Matthew Loo, a youth leader at Celebration who died in 2011 following routine oral surgery.

"Matthew Loo was one of our brightest youth leaders," said Goh. "He was a vocal believer, leader in the youth group, shared his faith, and was popular among his peers. He was athletic, loved music, and was a big personality."

The congregation started the fund four years ago to remember Loo's place in the congregation. —AM

Recognition Service for Staff

On March 8 at St. Mark's, Toronto, Guy Smagghe (executive director, Presbyterian World Service & Development), Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald (general secretary, LMA), and Jennifer de Combe (associate secretary, Canadian Ministries) were formally welcomed to their new positions at the national offices. In the back row are Rev. Harris Athanasiadis, Wendy Paterson and Michael Reid.

Special Event Focuses on Henri Nouwen

A CONFERENCE IN JUNE will honour the life and teachings of Henri Nouwen, the late Catholic priest, professor and prolific author. Way of the Heart: Exploring the inner journey through the lens of Henri Nouwen, will highlight how Nouwen's works still inspire theology, thought and action today.

"More than anything, his audience is telling us to continue his legacy," said Karen Pascal, executive director of the Henri Nouwen Society. "The great reality is that when he died, he had sold about a million-and-a-half books in his lifetime. He wrote 40 books, and 20 years later, all of them are still published except one. There have been over 7.5-million copies sold, and they are read around the world."

The international event will commemorate the 20th anniversary of Nouwen's death and runs from June 9-11 at the Erindale campus of the University of Toronto,

Mississauga. Organizers hope to draw 500 attendants from around the world. High-profile speakers Shane Claiborne, Esther de Waal and Ron Rolheiser will share how Henri influenced, inspired and informed their life and work, and a varied group of workshop leaders will discuss topics related to social justice, caregiving, spirituality, the environment, and the arts. Music will be led by Steve Bell.

Nouwen was born in Holland, but eventually made his home in Richmond Hill, Ont., at L'Arche Daybreak—one of more than 100 communities founded by Jean Vanier where people with and without developmental disabilities live together.

A second, smaller event entitled "Henri & me with Anne Lamott," will take place May 13 at Convocation Hall, University of Toronto.

For more information on both events, visit henrinouwen.org. —AM

OP-ED

Turn the Other Cheek

My run-in with security guards
has motivated change.

by VIVIAN KETCHUM

The ambulance attendant put me on the stretcher and I was off to the hospital.

Earlier that day I was at my doctor's office for a regular appointment. While I was waiting there, I saw the security guard trying to physically remove two homeless people from the waiting room. This was early January and it was -30°C outside and there was an extreme wind-chill warning. Wanting to do something, I got up and took a picture of what was happening with my cellphone.

As I went back to sit down, the security guard asked me to come out to the foyer. I refused. I was taken there anyway and was asked about the picture that I took. The situation escalated to where the two large security guards grabbed the phone from my

hands. I was forced to delete the pictures. During the struggle I fell over and somehow hit my head and hurt my shoulder.


I left the doctor's office in fear. I was not able to retrieve my cellphone from the security guards. I ran to Winnipeg Inner City Missions, an outreach of the Presbyterian Church and a place I know well, to see if they could help. While I was sitting in Rev. Margaret Mullin's office, I fell over and she had to phone the ambulance.

I was at the hospital for over 11 hours waiting and was examined by the doctor. There was some concern about bleeding in the brain. Rev. Margaret was with me the whole time. I had a slightly sprained left shoulder and a minor concussion. Nothing serious.

There was a police investigation, and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority did its own investigation into the matter. Weeks passed after the incident. I had a meeting with the vice president and chief operating officer of the WRHA and the head of the security firm. They both offered a verbal and written apology. I brought along a mediator whom I chose to be with me.

After the meeting, the WRHA decided that there would be changes made to its practices dealing with vulnerable people. There would be designated areas set aside for them in inclement weather. There would also be sensitivity training for the security guards—more aboriginal awareness and mental health awareness for all staff.

The police completed their own investigation and no charges were laid against the security guards. No signs of an assault. This was after viewing the security tape of the incident.

I was advised by some people to take legal action for what happened to me. I even went as far as taking some friendly advice from a friend with a legal background. But I have decided not to take any legal action; instead, I chose to work with the WRHA through these changes. I was able to share my personal experience of residential school with the top officials in that meeting. Why did I need to share that experience? Two different worlds, two cultures often meet at this medical office. Both unaware of each other. Both judging each other based on what they see on the surface. Now that will change with the new policy the WRHA will set in place—at least, that is what I am hoping for in the near future. 

Vivian Ketchum is a writer in Winnipeg. Turn to page 17 to read her monthly column in the Record.

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KALEIDOSCOPICALLY

Eastertide

Savouring the good news. *by* KATIE MUNNIK

EASTER COMES AND GOES TOO QUICKLY. After Lent's long weeks, Easter feels as short as an Ottawa springtime.

What if we could take more time and think of Easter not as a Sunday but as a season? For six weeks in Lent, we're encouraged to find a practice, perhaps read a new book, pray more broadly and walk more slowly and humbly through the days of Christ's temptations and his path to Jerusalem. Lent fits well into our late winter days when the light is growing but not yet warm. But what about Easter?

There are many traditions that mark Eastertide, a span of seven weeks between Easter and Pentecost. Tide is an old fashioned word for time, but I like how it suggests a coming and going, a pulling away and the returning flood.

What if we could hold onto the dazzling good news of the resurrection, turn it in our hands and watch it catch the light? What would that look like in daily life?

If Lent is about fasting, perhaps Eastertide might be about feasting. In his book *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, Jurgen Moltmann describes Jesus' life as "a >

They say the Scots built Canada.

We say we're still at it.

Alexander Graham Bell
THE TELEPHONE

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festal life." It is life at a crowded table—a table where outcasts are included, where there is enough for all, and good wine flows when we only expected functional plonk. That's grace, isn't it? Healing happens when we know that Christ not only gives abundantly, but provides a feast that death itself cannot terminate.

Through Christ, our lives are the ongoing Easter feast. But it's all too easy to let it slip past with our rush towards warmth, spring and regular life after Lent's lentil soup.

So here's my suggestion for Eastertide: Let's eat chocolate. Not the kids' big-eared bunnies or all-too-gooney crème eggs, but good chocolate. Just one small square every day between Easter and Pentecost. Take a moment. Taste. We could do this joyfully. Not as indulgence or for greed, but as a new way of tasting the good each day. It would be a deliberate and slow practice to help the truth of the good news seep into our hearts.

There is a wonderful sacramental moment in the recent BBC adaptation of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Pierre Bezukhov has been captured by Napoleon's army. Hungry and hopeless as Moscow burns, Pierre sits despondent in prison. Another prisoner shares a crust of bread with him, and when Pierre takes the bread and too quickly begins to eat it, the other prisoner stops him, saying that he will never taste it that way. He pulls out his small supply of salt and sprinkles it on Pierre's bread to bring out the flavour. It's a small act, but a profound one, and Pierre remembers it. Later, when he is free and sits at home with a laden table before him, he takes a moment to slice a potato and sprinkle it with a little salt, then to eat slowly, savouring the moment and acknowledging the gift.

I describe this moment as sacramental because in this careful act, the grace and goodness of God is celebrated. It is simple and ordinary, but here love is made tangible.

Chocolate may not feel like the logical next step, but perhaps it could be a symbol for the goodness we receive. Our hearts need sweetness as much as all those April buds need light and clean water to blossom. So let's stretch Easter this year, shall we? ☪

Katie Munnik lives in Cardiff, Wales, with three kids and a professor husband. She blogs at TheMessyTable.com/presbyterianrecord.ca.



Peter's vision of a sheet with animals by Domenico Fetti. Circa 1619. Oil on poplar wood.

PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

Beyond the Rules

God is waiting for us. *by* **LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

Fifth Sunday of Easter
April 24, 2016
Acts 11:1-18

Peter has come back to home base in Jerusalem after an exciting road trip. In Chapter 10 we have the whole story of Peter's encounter with Cornelius

and his household. Word has reached Jerusalem ahead of Peter. In our reading today he shares the highlights of his world-changing discovery.

The newborn church is still trying to figure out who's in and who's out. What does it take for someone who isn't from the first generation to become a follower on the Way? Who gets in right away? Who has to... well, what should they do before ➤

they come inside?

The only rules Peter and his friends know are the laws of their own people. Laws Jesus defended, sometimes. Sometimes re-interpreted. Sometimes opposed. But they don't have Rabbi Jesus there to interpret the laws. The leaders in Jerusalem do their best to uphold the rules and traditions.

The Spirit throws the apostles into one dilemma after another. Peter and others face situations that call them to break the rules by touching the sick, even touching dead bodies. And accepting hospitality from Gentiles.

They meet Gentiles who already know about Israel's God, and want to know more.

Peter, and at least some of the leaders in Jerusalem, begin to understand they're part of something new. Something that embraces the whole world, not just a little patch of the earth at the east end of the Mediterranean.

Purity codes and laws of separation exist to protect us against them. Throughout the Bible, Israel is always a minority surrounded by greater powers, often at the mercy of those powers.

Our sexuality won't change if we encounter someone who's struggling with his or her own identity and just needs us to hear and withhold judgment.

It's important to have a religion that reinforces a sense of difference from others. People under real or imagined threat need to believe they're right, and God is on their side.

Peter discovers a whole new way of seeing the world. That picnic blanket crowded with most of Eden and everything from Noah's Ark is a sign of a whole new creation.

The newborn church is growing quickly into a new kind of community that can exist anywhere and welcome


anyone. Identity as a follower of Jesus isn't a matter of being a Jew like Jesus. It's about living his life of faithfulness and compassion. Cornelius and his household already live in God's blessing presence when Peter gets there. Peter's the man from outside, till he accepts their invitation, listens to their story, and sees the Spirit present with them in power.

Do we still live as if we are protected from others by a purity code, by laws of separation? Do we believe we will be further than we already are from God if we draw closer to people we see as "others?" (That's what "gentiles" means: the Others.)

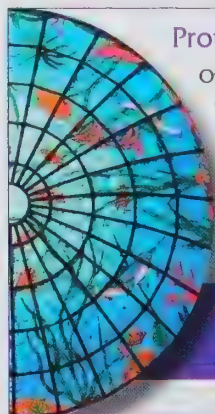
We can't catch poverty from someone who has less than us. Mental illness isn't contagious. We won't be any less Christian if we listen to someone who doesn't believe as we do. Our sexuality won't change if we encounter someone who's struggling with his or her own identity and just needs us to hear and withhold judgment.

We're only human. We stay with who we know, taking refuge in limits. We read the Bible as it suits us, skipping where it speaks with an inclusive, expansive, imperative voice.

Meanwhile, God waits for us outside our circles. Beyond what we know. Yes, even beyond what we believe. The story of the newborn church in Acts tells us the church that lives and grows is always reaching beyond itself to discover, not just where God wants them to go, but where God's Spirit has already gone ahead of them.

To catch up with the Spirit we have to be ready to take some risks. And break some old rules. 

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe is minister at Glenview, Toronto.



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RENEWAL

Recovering Joy

God is near. *by* CHRIS CARTER

“

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” (Philippians 4:4-6)

About five years ago, I was visiting my sister at her cottage in the summertime. It was first thing in the morning, the sun was emerging beautifully from her slumber, the mist rising mysteriously and majestically from the water, and I was down at the dock with

my Bible in hand and my toes in the water. It was then that I heard that Still Small Voice say to me, “You are destined for my joy.” That experience has long lingered with me—and I believe it’s a biblical message for not just me, but for every believer in Jesus Christ.

We live in dangerous, nervous times. The church is in flux. There’s much to be worried about. But we’re told not to worry (Matthew 6:25-34!), and we are told to be joyful. “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” And then, Paul says, tellingly, “Let your gentleness be known to >

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RENEWAL, continued

everyone. The Lord is near."

Why are we to be joyful? Because the Lord is near, that's why. And He is a God of grace. Think about it: We don't do anything to deserve God's love, God's forgiveness, God's salvation, God's amazing life and eternity. It is all a free gift given at the precious price of the Lord Jesus himself.

In fact, that can be a fun way of recovering joy: Commit a random act of giving for someone else. One of the most hilarious things you can do is, when you come up to a toll booth on the road, or up to the drive-through at your favourite coffee stop, tell the cashier that your good friend is behind you and say that you'd like to pay for their bill as well as yours. If they catch up to you, you'll get the most priceless, quizzical looks you've ever seen! I've done it, and I've chuckled for the better part of a half hour afterwards. But isn't that what Jesus has done for us all? He's paid our bill, and he is the Lord of Joy.

Every believer in Jesus has been destined for his joy. Our God is a God not only of love and power and grace and holiness, but He's a God of joy as well. In his book, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, Timothy Keller summarizes things better than I ever could: "We know of no joy higher than being loved and loving in return, but a triune God would know that love and joy in unimaginable, infinite dimensions. God is, therefore, infinitely, profoundly happy, filled with perfect joy—not some abstract tranquility but the fierce happiness of dynamic, loving relationships. Knowing this God is not to get beyond emotions or thoughts but to be filled with glorious love and joy."

We look past our circumstances to Him ... and we rejoice. 

Rev. Chris Carter is minister at St. Andrew's, Parry Sound, Ont.

SHARING WITNESS

It Takes Faith to Build Trust

Trust in the right people can create positive change.

by VIVIAN KETCHUM

IDID NOT LIKE THE CHURCH when I was first asked to join the Healing and Reconciliation Committee in the late 1990s.

At the time I was working at Winnipeg Inner City Missions with executive director Rev. Margaret Mullin. Working in various roles as youth worker, board member, etc., I had learned to trust Rev. Margaret like I rarely trust anybody else. Trust in people doesn't come easy for me. So when she asked me to join the Healing and Reconciliation Committee, I agreed based on the trust that I had in her.

The committee was an initiative of the Presbyterian Church to build better relationships between the church and aboriginal people. It was going to do this by participating in sharing circles across Canada.

Joining the committee couldn't have come at a worse time for me. I was just starting the legal process for my residential school claim against the church. I was seeing a counsellor to help with the emotional challenges. My emotions regarding the church were very raw and coming to the surface. I viewed the church in a negative light during the early stages.

This is where faith stepped in and created a change in me—new eyes and a new heart to see my church neighbours in a new light. The sharing circles were very difficult for everybody that was participating or sharing. I can't share what was said in the circles as the stories are considered sacred. After the sharing circles were completed, the committee did a wrap-up and debriefing. It was a way of connecting with each other after such an emotional process. One member of the committee broke down >

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SHARING WITNESS, continued

in tears and he shared how he was deeply affected by hearing what was said in the circles. He couldn't go any further and asked to leave the committee.

I was affected by this member's emotions and tears. He was broken by the shared stories of the residential school survivors. It never occurred to me that a church member could be hurt emotionally by our stories. I was no longer thinking of my own pain, but my church neighbour's pain. It was never my intention to cause someone pain, but to teach others about our history. I saw my church neighbours through different eyes and a new heart that day; now I could honestly call them my friends, my brothers and sisters.

The legal hearing for my residential school claim arrived and I asked one of my church neighbours to sit in as the church witness. I hold Rev. Ian Morrison in high regard and was honoured that he agreed to my request. This was a difficult part of my claim. I had a Miss Beasley doll to hold in my arms as a grounding tool. As a child, my parents bought me the same type of doll and it held positive memories. I held the doll in my arms as the lawyers brought up my painful stories.

It was a grueling session; reliving my experience in residential school. After nearly 45 minutes, a lawyer asked if I had any anger issues. I looked him straight in the eye and said, "No, I don't. If I did, I would have hit you a long time ago." There was dead silence in the room for a minute, then the lawyer turned around and said he had no more questions for me.

These moments have been part of my faith walk. Trust in the right people can create positive change. There may be tears shed in the healing process, but healthy tears can be a teaching moment if we let them be so. ✚

Vivian Ketchum is Anishinabe of Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation, outside of Kenora, Ont. She lives in Winnipeg.

Life

Thoughts and inspiration for your daily life



FAMILY

Heaps of Hospitality

How a hotel became church for a family in need.

by MARTY MOLENGRAAF



FAMILY, continued

My father, Brian Molengraaf, died early on Monday, February 8. It was not entirely unexpected, but the swiftness of his death was surprising and unsettling. Dad had been in and out of hospital for a number of years and each time the doctors called to say he may not make it, he always bounced back.

This time he did not.

Dad was not a future planner, choosing instead to work things out when they came his way. As a result, no plans had been made for his funeral and so we had to make some quick decisions. One of the decisions made early in the week was to have the reception following the funeral at the funeral home itself, but we found out that the funeral home no longer offered that service. It was then decided to have the reception at the home of one of my nieces. She lives in southwestern Ontario with her husband and two young children. We spent the week going through Dad's things and cleaning and sorting out his house, and at the same time taking time to talk to each other, share stories and grieve.

My wife, Barb joined us on the Thursday and we booked into a hotel that afternoon. In the evening we went to the visitation at the funeral home together with the rest of our extended family. At the visitation my sister expressed

concern about having the reception at her daughter's house. Her daughter (my niece) had a tough week and with two small children no longer was in a position to host the reception. Her house was a mess and there were many more people at the visitation than we had anticipated. So, being a Presbyterian minister, I promised I would find a place for the reception, believing that the local Presbyterian church would be able to accommodate us.

I called the church and later received a call back from the minister there who informed me with deep regret that due to church policy and insurance regulations they could not accommodate our request. We were considered an "outside group" according to their policy and insurance regulations, and as such, much more time would have been needed to allow us to have the reception at the church.

Upon returning to the hotel, I went to the front desk and asked the woman there if there was a meeting room we could book for the following day. The meeting rooms they had were either booked or far too small for a group of 50 or 60 people.

But then she said: "You can have the reception right here in our common area."

"That would be wonderful," I responded, "but we already have our own food and coffee coming from other businesses."

"That is not a problem," came the reply.

"Thank you so much," I said, "you have no idea how much we appreciate this. What is the rate for using the common space?"

"It's complimentary," she replied.

In a word, I was astonished. Here I stood, a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, a church of Jesus Christ who taught the incredible


importance of hospitality. The church could not give us hospitality due to policies and regulations, but here a business showed hospitality in abundance.

The next day, a different staff person was at the front desk. But like the

**In a word,
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Here I stood, a minister
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woman the night before, she practiced hospitality to us all—all 60 of us. It so happened that February 12 was also my sister's birthday, and the hotel sales manager went out to purchase a birthday cake and delivered it to us. We were surrounded by hospitality and kindness.

As a family we will be forever grateful to the astounding hospitality given to us as a gift. To the staff at that hotel: On that day and in that place you were community to us. You practiced love and hospitality in abundance. You were "church" to us in a way that the church could not be.

From all of us, thank you. We salute you! And God bless you. 

Rev. Marty Molengraaf is minister at Unionville Presbyterian in Unionville, Ont. This story was originally written as a thank-you note to hotel staff.



VIEWPOINT

The View from Space

A planet of wonder. *by* ALLEN AICKEN

Falling in love, a new pair of glasses, and a diagnosis of fourth-stage cancer have one thing in common: The world is seen very differently the next day. Christians have often claimed that seeing this same world through biblical eyes has an equally disrupting effect.

We first saw the world through biblical eyes before science amounted to much, and before Christians took over its empires. Theologians were there to help us interpret what the Bible was saying, but they were vulnerable. The powers of this world skewed their interpreting. They >

VIEWPOINT, continued

managed to adapt to such threats as Copernicus, Darwin and John Lennon, but they remained uncomfortable with them.

The preacher mounts the pulpit. The best attempt is given to portray the world through biblical eyes. A Presbyterian preacher might even feel constrained to quote the work of a five-centuries-ago scholar named John Calvin. Deep in the pews comes the sound, either of a snore or of a whispered, "Oh, no, not Calvin!" It's not going very well, is it?

There will be a few thousand ways in which we see our world differently, but let me focus on a big one.

I have a clever colleague who asks his congregation to imagine one of those pre-Google encyclopedia sets that take up, let's say, 40 inches on a bookshelf. Let that represent the time that our planet has been in existence. How long have human beings been on this earth? Almost the thickness of one page. It's pretty hard to maintain that this planet is primarily a human enterprise. "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it..." (Psalm 24:1) What happened to people as the goal and focal point of it all?

I can remember theology classes of a few decades ago where we learned about the "tridimensional relationship." One corner of the triangle is me, the second corner is my neighbour or "the other," while the crowning apex is "God." First Nations people tended to see a four-cornered world, the fourth of which was the earth itself and all its myriad life forms. So we not only have to relate to one another, as hard



How long have human beings been on this earth? Almost the thickness of one page. It's pretty hard to maintain that this planet is primarily a human enterprise.

as a task as that is, we must also relate to every living creature. That fourth dimension has largely been missed by centuries of theologians, preoccupied as they were with human empire. The Bible did not ignore creation. It would have been hard to do so; most of the writers of the Hebrew Bible, in particular, were farmers.


The opening pages of the scriptures imagine the human being as created, along with many other inhabitants of our globe, each of which is called "good" or "very good." When a human is brought into being it is called "Adam," which we then make

into a name that we give to boys. Thanks to a recent Old Testament scholar we can no longer avoid the fact that the Hebrew word for "earth" and for "human being" are two different forms of the same word. She suggested that we should understand humanity not as "Adam" but as "earth creature." She made such a compelling score at that point that no one has been able to ignore her insight.

We are made of the earth. We are one with all the creatures. A relationship that only allows for other people, and not the wider environment, can go very much awry. Any attempt to understand God as one who is exclusively concerned with human enterprise is doomed to rot.

It has been observed—and I thank my teacher, Sallie McFague, for this observation—that we people depend upon the whole of creation for our survival. All the other creatures matter and the death of species ultimately contributes to our own death. The whole earth is sacred.

And yet, none of it depends upon us. If one looks for an exception, our pets are the only one that can be found. Indeed, the biggest enemy to the survival of the oceans, the bees, the wildlife, the obliterating diseases of trees... is the human race.

If ever there was a need for help in understanding our environment, the creation, and how the church and the world might relate to this wildly beautiful gift of creation, it is now. 

Rev. Allen Aicken is a retired minister living in Vancouver.

PROFILE

Preaching Grace

Rev. Dr. Thomas Long to speak in Calgary.

by SUE MCMASTER

As a young boy in Atlanta in the mid-'60s, Tom Long encountered a local Presbyterian minister "standing tall and courageous on the matter of civil rights," a hot topic at the time. "The congregation responded with anger at his prophetic message but he returned no evil for evil," Long recalls. "He was loving and gracious."

The exchanges had a profound effect on the young Thomas Long. "Watching him, I felt the stirrings of my own calling. I thought, 'that's a life worth living.'"

Despite those stirrings, Long pursued pre-med courses at Erskine College in South Carolina. He worked his way through college as a disc jockey at a local radio station. As the newest kid at the station, he got the shifts no one else wanted, including Sundays. It was there he first encountered the Lutheran series, *The Protestant Hour* and Edmund Steimle. "I had never

heard anyone preach the gospel quite like he did and, because of that voice, the direction of my own ministry was ... profoundly changed."

Steimle was an advocate of narrative preaching and wrote the popular book *Preaching the Story*. Long followed that voice on the radio—what he calls his "second calling into ministry" after the first as a boy in Atlanta—and has since been professor of preaching at Princeton Theological College, editor of *Theology Today* and author of many books including *The Witness of Preaching*, one of the most widely used texts on preaching in seminaries around the world.

Canadians have a rare opportunity to hear Rev. Dr. Thomas Long deliver a public lecture and a preaching conference on his first visit to Alberta at Grace, Calgary, next month.

On May 27 at 7:30 p.m., Dr. Long's public lecture "The Churches at the

Four Corners" is a discussion about the similarities and differences in the four gospels: The Church of St. Mark, The Church of St. Matthew, The Church of St. Luke, and The Church of St. John.

This is followed by a day-long preaching workshop on May 28, designed to give preachers practical tools for more effective preaching.

Long was a pastor in an Atlanta church for many years, eventually completing his PhD in preaching at Princeton Seminary before he was called to the Columbia Seminary in Atlanta and then Princeton. He is currently Bandy Professor Emeritus of Preaching at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta.

Long's public talk will examine the similarities and differences of how each of the four churches understand Jesus Christ amid the challenges of Christian life today.

"This will be an interesting learning experience," says Long. "Many people are not aware of the really distinctive voices in each gospel. They really do see Jesus and the role of the church in distinct ways."

Long adds that "the witness of the New Testament is not a soloist, it's a choir" and "all voices are important if we are to understand the fullness of Jesus."

The preaching workshop is aimed at seasoned preachers who will learn how to more effectively address the whirlwind of modern life with inspirational, relevant messages from the pulpit. In applied terms, "what do listeners need in a practical sense," and "how does a preacher take biblical passages and find something exciting for the sermon," he says.

"Anyone who stands up to preach in 2016 is in a different experience than 60 years ago," Long explains. "The world has changed, and increasingly

the church is a dispensable alternative. We hear more about people being spiritual but not religious. And a preacher has to stand up and speak into that."

There are "great challenges" for preachers today, and Long says preachers can "easily be discouraged." But he adds this is a cyclical process and there are many encouraging signs of hope that preaching is making a difference in people's lives.

"There are moments every 40 or 50 years when it doesn't go well in the pulpit and preaching is not esteemed in the culture," he says. "I hope to encourage (preachers) about the importance of preaching and how it is having an effect beyond how we perceive it."

The "Preaching Grace" event was made possible by an annual gift from the Margaret and Robert Montgomery

Fund. The Montgomerys are longtime members and supporters of Grace, Calgary, and come from families where excellent preaching was respected and admired. Their commitment is to a program that encourages biblical preaching that is life-giving and transformational. Their vision for Preaching Grace was for an annual event that would eventually grow to a national scope with ecumenical participation.

Mrs. Montgomery said Preaching Grace is very dear to her heart. "We have an understanding of the power of preaching in the ministry of the church and the effect it has had in our families over generations," she says.

Rev. Dr. Jean Morris is an associate minister at Grace and the driving force behind Preaching Grace. She was a student of Dr. Long at Princeton 30 years

ago. To Morris, Long is a teacher who, decades later, still calls the best out of his students and a preacher who inspires the church to be its best in the world God loves.

"Dr. Long is inspirational and excellent at his craft but also faithful, generous and gracious. He loves life and has a joyful perspective that he inspires in preaching, which is rare," says Morris.

Long will also preach from the pulpit on Sunday, May 29 at 10:30 a.m. His sermon is "The Open Window," with scripture from Luke 16:19-31. ☛

To learn more please visit:
gracechurchcalgary.com/preaching-grace or contact
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Sue McMaster is a member at Grace, Calgary, Alta.

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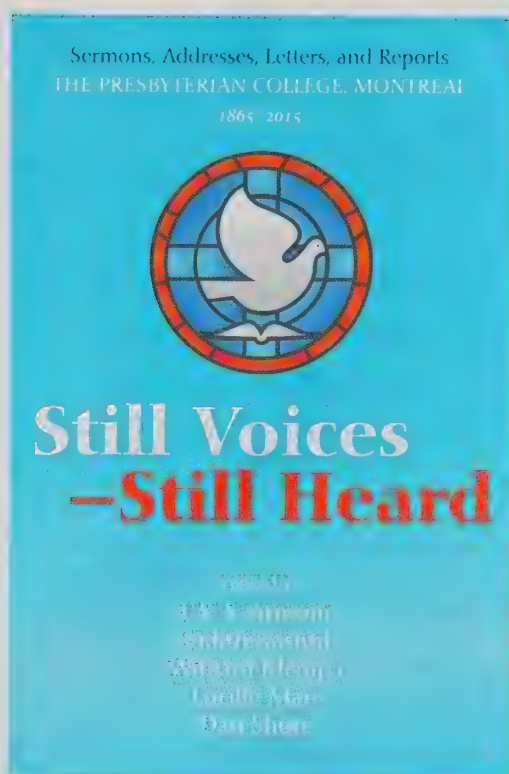
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Still Voices – Still Heard:

Sermons, Addresses, Letters, and Reports from the Presbyterian College, Montreal, 1865-2015.

Edited by J.S.S. Armour,

Judith Kashul, William Klempa,

Lucille Marr and Dan Shute.

Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015.

REVIEW

Theological Schools Matter

Presbyterian College, Montreal has a global reach.

by JOHN VISSERS

D ID YOU KNOW THAT James Naismith, the inventor of basketball, was a graduate of the Presbyterian College, Montreal? Or that Cairine R. Mackay Wilson, the first woman to sit in the Senate of Canada, was a Presbyterian and benefactor of our theological school in Montreal?

These are two of 13 individuals profiled in a new book produced to mark the

150th anniversary of the Presbyterian College, Montreal (1865-2015). *Still Voices—Still Heard* tells the stories of graduates, faculty and benefactors chosen to represent something of the college's wide influence. As Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris notes in the foreword, this is a "collection of essays gathered both as a celebration of and a theological reflection upon the one hundred fifty years" of the college's "service >

REVIEW, continued

to the church and world.”

Let me begin with a confession: I am a biased reviewer. From 1999–2012, I served as the Presbyterian College’s seventh principal. So, although I had nothing to do with its publication, I read this book with the keen interest of an insider. That said I am delighted to report that this is a very fine volume from which I learned an immense amount. A good read and a fitting tribute to the college’s life and legacy, it deserves to be known widely across our church.

That’s because this book not only accomplishes what it sets out to do: to tell the story of PC and celebrate its rich history and extensive influence; it also gives glimpses into the lives of notable Presbyterians who have made important contributions to church and society in Canada.

Let’s be clear. This is not a standard institutional history. It does not tell the story of the Presbyterian College using a strictly chronological narrative. Rather, as principal Dale Woods notes in the preface, this book tells the story in a more dynamic way that tries “to capture the spirit and passion of those who helped shape the life of the College and those who graduated from the College” in the past by letting them “speak in their own words.”

The 13 chapters are divided into three sections historically spanning the college’s history. Each chapter presents a sermon, address, letter, or report introduced by a brief biography and followed by a commentary. Thus, the title is both creative and as Stephen Farris notes, clever: “All the voices are ‘still,’ that is, all the subjects have died. But through the sermons and addresses included in this volume, those voices are also ‘still heard.’”

So, whose voices are still heard in

The Presbyterian College had a passion for a theologically literate leadership. This book reminds us that well-educated, deeply faithful people make a difference.

these pages? Well, in addition to those noted above it begins in the mid-19th century with John William Dawson, scientist and principal of McGill University, instrumental in PC’s founding and its longstanding association with the university. Donald Harvey MacVicar the first principal. Jane Drummond Redpath, benefactor, tireless advocate for missions, and member of the powerful English-speaking community of Montreal in the 19th century that shaped the early life of the college. A. Daniel Coussirat, the professor who pioneered French work for the college and the Presbyterian Church in Canada.


Other chapters focus on Andrew S. Grant, medical missionary to the Yukon during the Klondike Gold Rush. George C. Pidgeon, the first moderator of the United Church of Canada. W.G. Brown, anti-Unionist Prairie church leader who for a few short years was a member of the Canadian parliament just prior to his death.

The collection is rounded out by essays on John Foote, recipient of the Victoria Cross, and well known for his courageous ministry as a military chaplain during the Second World

War. C. Ritchie Bell, PC’s professor of pastoral theology during the 1960s and 1970s who, perhaps more than anyone else, is responsible for the college’s focus on the practical preparation of ministers for congregational ministry.

Alison Stewart-Patterson, among the first women graduates, whose commitment to mutuality in ministry left a lasting legacy following her untimely death from cancer. And bringing us into the 21st century, R. Sheldon MacKenzie, noted preacher and long-time professor of New Testament at Memorial University.

Why should you read this book? Well, it touches on topics that are still important for the church today: the role of women in church and society, the place of Protestants in Quebec, the meaning of mission in Canada, the influence of leading Presbyterians in shaping the public life of our nation, including education, business, and government. The many sermons provide a rich resource for the study of preaching in Presbyterian pulpits, spanning generations.

By looking backwards this book reminds us that theological schools matter. Those who founded and supported the Presbyterian College had a passion for a theologically literate leadership. This book reminds us that well-educated, deeply faithful people make a difference. This book bears witness to the national and global reach of a small, focused denominational school, against all odds, over many years. For Presbyterians in 21st-century post-Christendom Canada, that’s worth remembering and celebrating, perhaps now more than ever. 

Rev. Dr. John Vissers is director of academic programs at Knox College, Toronto.

Focus

Stories of mission, ministry and community



REFLECTION

An Impossible Gesture

The goodness of the Lord.

by ROLAND DE VRIES

On the final day of a recent study trip to Cuba, one of our Pentecostal students led morning devotions by inviting us to respond to his “God is good” with “All the time.” And to his “All the time” with “God is good.” It was a great start to the day, infusing our hearts and minds with a reminder of the constant presence and surpassing goodness of God. That was in the morning.

The rest of the day was spent relaxing in the town of Varadero after an intense week of conversations and encounters in Matanzas and Havana. Students and faculty walked >

through the town, spent time on the beach, and swam in the profoundly turquoise waters. For a variety of reasons (let's not get bogged down in the important questions of why or how) I had ended the week with \$4,000 cash in my money belt, along with my passport. Since I was wearing a swimsuit that day, the money belt was installed in the bottom of my camera bag. Until it wasn't.

Arriving back at the beach after lunch, I opened my camera bag to get something out and discovered that the money belt was gone. I checked and rechecked the bag, panic setting in. I realized I must have inadvertently pulled the money belt out and dropped it when I stopped to take pictures of a hummingbird during my walk.

God is good. All the time?

I retraced my steps, searching. Students retraced my steps, searching. Panic was soon displaced by, "I am such an idiot! A total idiot." How was I going to explain this financial loss to my colleagues in Montreal? How was I going to explain this to my wife? I prayed and the students prayed. But after an hour and half of searching I had resigned myself to these losses.

The manager of the Presbyterian guesthouse where we had lodged our belongings decided to go to the nearby Cuban immigration office to see if they had any ideas about what we should do.

When she walked in, the officer at the main desk told her incredulously: "A woman just handed in a money belt with a Canadian passport and \$4,000."

Let that sink in. As an acquaintance in Canada later said to me: "That doesn't happen."

It was apparently a Cuban woman

**Jesus embodies this
in his own person
as he both expresses
confidence in the one
to whom he prays
(trusts for his own
vindication, through
resurrection) and
lives in a suffering
service that
acknowledges the
absence of God.**

from the eastern provinces who was in the town of Varadero for the day—she didn't leave her name or any contact information. Which means that there was no way for me to say thank you to her, Whoever she is, and wherever she is, she will remain in my mind and heart as an expression of the unreserved goodness of God.

When I returned to the guesthouse, I saw our Pentecostal student and said to him, "God is good." He replied, of course, "All the time."

A question: What if the money belt had not been turned in? Would God's goodness suddenly be in question? Even to ask this question as a privileged westerner is to expose its absurdity. The loss of a passport and even such an amount of money would certainly cause some embarrassment, and be some financial burden, but it would not entail substantial grief or pain. Whether or

not the money belt was returned, "God is good. All the time."

The mystery and challenge of this faith-filled affirmation becomes most significant in situations of deep loss and need. I'm reminded of the knowing nods of some Cubans we met when they referred to the "special period" in Cuba—a period of economic crisis following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. The economy ground to a halt, with transportation and agricultural sectors becoming immobilized due to a lack of diesel and gasoline. There were shortages of food and medication. There was very real pain. Hence the knowing nods.

The mystery and challenge of our declaration, "God is good, all the time," is expressed by sisters and brothers who face real pain and grief, for any number of reasons. The mystery and challenge of this declaration is expressed in the fact that it often alternates with a cry of, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Jesus embodies this in his own person as he both expresses confidence in the one to whom he prays (trusts for his own vindication, through resurrection) and lives in a suffering service that acknowledges the absence of God.

Yes, God is good. All the time. Yet, this profession of faith must be nuanced by the realization that this goodness is distant and future for many, as the Psalmist acknowledges in his own moment of trouble: "I am sure I will see the goodness of the Lord, in the land of the living."

All the time. God is good. 

Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries is director of pastoral studies at Presbyterian College, Montreal.



WELLNESS

Mentoring Ministers

No one can do the job by themselves.

by DENISE ALLEN-MACARTNEY

With A KEYSTROKE on his laptop, Dale Woods welcomes a seventh minister into the meeting. “Let’s start with a check-in,” he says. “Steve, how are things in Vancouver?”

Good news there—Steve survived boot camp in his chaplaincy training with the Canadian Forces Reserves. It’s good to be

back with his family. In Toronto, one minister has just met the session of her new charge. Someone else wants advice about leading a congregational meeting as interim moderator. Another participant can’t stay long. He wants to be home helping to care for his wife and newborn son.

A unique mentorship program out ➤

of Presbyterian College, Montreal, is strengthening 31 pastors and their congregations across the country. Small groups—six at last count—meet monthly by videoconference with their mentors, each an experienced minister. Participants brainstorm approaches to challenges, study together, share resources, and pray for each other.

"I honestly believe that if I didn't find some local connections and the Montreal mentoring group, I would no longer be in ministry," says Steve Filyk, who has served seven years in his present charge, Kerrisdale, Vancouver. "This is not the sort of work that I could do alone," he says. The group provides him a place to unload burdens and gain other perspectives.

Mentorship groups are the brainchild of principal Dale Woods and Presbyterian College's newly-minted Leadership Centre.

"No one graduating from marketing ends up in the first day running Ford Motor Company," says Woods. "Our vocation is unique in that grads are asked to take on a significant leadership role without first learning the ropes."

"I have only nine years in ordained ministry," notes Filyk. "But when you add up the combined years of the group, we probably have 50 years between us. The mentorship group helped me guide our session and the congregation through some tricky waters with, I think, greater wisdom and skill."

TECHNOLOGY provides the platform, connecting people from across the country. But technology brings frustrations—insufficient bandwidth, faulty connections, computer crashes. Nothing beats sitting down, in person, over a beer or a breakfast croissant.

So, each year in June, participants head to Montreal for mentoring week: five days of conversation, relaxation and

'Ministry makes more sense to me when it is shared,' she says. 'More people are praying specifically for me and my congregation. There is a deeper sense of accountability.'

rest. Mentoring week allows groups and mentors to build community, explore big questions, worship together, pray for each other, and enjoy Montreal's great jazz.

"Attending mentoring week is like drinking from a big well," says Sybil Mosley, in her sixth year as minister at Livingstone, Montreal. She cherishes the opportunity to meet face-to-face with peers and hear their experiences. "Ministry makes more sense to me when it is shared," she says. "More people are praying specifically for me and my congregation. There is a deeper sense of accountability."

"Mentoring is close to discipling, which is how Jesus spent his ministry," says Woods. "Jesus did two things as I understand it. He taught and he healed. There are many people who don't know the wonder of God's grace, and there is much healing to do in our communities."

Woods says the advantages ripple out beyond the groups. New grads experience less anxiety than they would


on their own. They're freed to develop their innate creativity. Congregations reap those benefits, and they gain indirectly from mentors' expertise.

And the mentors themselves? They volunteer their time. But Woods says the energy goes both ways. The mentorship group keeps him in touch with graduates as they embrace their calling. Working with creative and gifted new ministers, says Woods: "It continues to ignite my own passion."

And Presbyterian College benefits as well. New pastors connect the school to the front lines of congregational ministry, helping the faculty hone their programs for today's challenges.

"Congregational life is not what it was 50 years ago," says Woods. Back then, new ministers often went to vibrant, healthy congregations. They enjoyed the luxury of learning on the job for their first five or six years. "Today many congregations are on the edge of survival. So we must be committed to congregational renewal."

Woods envisions the program giving birth to something new. In Woods' mind, mentorship groups can be a force for change. He'd like to grow the program to include 12 groups mentored by experienced ministers across the country. And he'd like them to fuel renewal among congregations.

"I'm hoping that our groups become centres for conversations of renewal. If we can grow the groups to 60 people, we have the opportunity to help bring renewal to 60 congregations. I know that is a wild dream, but I believe God dreams it." 

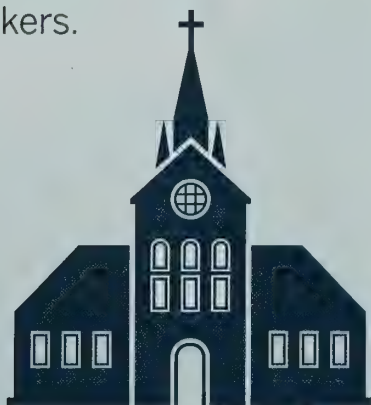
Denise Allen-Macartney is minister at Gloucester, Ottawa. She's part of a Presbyterian College mentorship group that joins seven ministers in three provinces with their mentor in Montreal. Denise serves on the Board of Governors of Presbyterian College.

IN DEPTH

Supply & Demand

A statistical look at
Presbyterian Church workers.

by **ANDREW FAIZ**



FROM 1994 TO 2015, there were 642 new entrants into ministry within the Presbyterian Church in Canada, either as students graduating from our seminaries, or joining the church from other denominations, countries or ministry tracks. Currently, 369, or 58 per cent, are still active on the rolls of presbyteries—they have a half- to full-time position as minister or church worker. Twenty-nine per cent, or 189, are on the appendix to the rolls—they do not have at least a half-time charge within the denomination. Eighty-four, or 13 per cent >

IN DEPTH, continued

cent, are no longer on the rolls—they have dropped out of participating on any level within our denomination.

Of those 84 no longer on presbytery rolls, 18 have died and 41 have transferred their credentials from the PCC to another denomination. Twenty-two have disappeared without any official record—they may have left the ministry or the PCC. We don't know.

Of the 189 who are on the appendix to the rolls, 66 have retired. Ninety-one are without charge; that means 14 per cent of the new entrants over the past two decades don't have an active half- to full-time position within the denomination. That's a high percentage of un- or under-employed church workers. This is worrying.

Hidden in plain sight in the 2015 Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly are lots and lots of statistics. According to that book, there were 719 pastoral charges. There were 552 ministers working in congregations, and another 70 church workers who are not in congregations but work within the PCC in various chaplaincies or other work that keeps them on presbytery rolls. (These numbers would reflect all clergy or church workers, including those who entered the PCC before 1994.)

That means there are 167 vacant pastoral charges. So, why aren't those 14 per cent of new entrants since 1994 filling those empty congregations, along with those currently un- or under-employed who entered before 1994? If only data were that simple. One speculation: the jobs may not be in parts of the country convenient to a minister's family, perhaps.

And, according to a response to an overture in the 2015 A&P, some of those 167 vacant pastoral charges may not be able to afford a minister. Some congregations are only able to offer one-year contracts; others are only able to have pulpit supply without pastoral duties. These would not be ideal for a young minister, for example, who wants security and consistency for her family. These positions often go to retired ministers who are still able to draw their pensions and work limited term contracts. The relationship between supply and demand is complicated.

One other set of statistics in the 2015 A&P adds another shade to this generalized portrait of clergy within the PCC. The Employment Assistance Program is an initiative of the Life and Mission Agency (Ministry and Church Vocations), started in 2010. It pays for counselling and other related services for PCC employees and their families. In its first four and a quarter years the program was accessed 360 times—that could reflect multiple uses by any one individual. Of those, 80 per cent of the cases were for


church employees, while the remaining fifth were for those related to church employees.

The report states: "By far the most common were personal/emotional concerns, which 152 [cases] identified as the reason they had requested counselling; 67 of these 152 [cases] attributed their concerns to stress. Couple/relationship and work-related concerns were the next most common emerging issues (61 and 50 [cases], respectively). Of the 50 [cases] with work-related concerns, 33 attributed their issues to stress. A small number of EAP clients requested counselling for family issues (30 [cases]), while the smallest group identified concerns regarding addiction (seven [cases])."

"A small proportion of EAP clients requested work-life services (17 per cent, or 60 of 360). These [cases] sought expert advice in dealing with legal matters, financial matters including credit and debt, personal health and well-being including nutrition and disease management, child/youth care, and elder/adult care."

It is hard to say what these numbers tell us about the life of clergy and their family, without more accurate, and hence more intrusive, data. But we do know that nearly 400 times over the course of this half-decade the stress and anxieties affecting those who work for us, and their families, have been assessed and hopefully dealt with in some effective way.

What caused that stress is mere speculation. But we do know there are more ministers than there are available church jobs, that congregations are struggling and many can't afford a minister despite having a dedicated if small membership, and that over the course of two decades a significant portion of those who trained to serve the church dissipate away from that work—some die, or retire, some move to other churches, some drop out, and some struggle with long term under-employment. And we know that some struggle with stress, which may be caused by work or is otherwise aggravated by it.

We also know that the EAP is an important tool that helps with the stresses of ministry in this century. And we aren't surprised to learn that it, too is subject to financial pressures like everything else in the church today. It would be a pity to lose it; it's a balm against the stresses for those who need it desperately. 

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

All the data in this article has either been provided by or parsed by Rev. Susan Shaffer, associate secretary of Ministry and Church Vocations. Thank you, Rev. Shaffer for your guidance.

THEOLOGY

Pastor Theologians

Two books reclaim the call for theological leaders of the church. *by* **PETER BUSH**



B EING A MINISTER IS STRESSFUL. In part the stress arises from what M. Craig Barnes, president of Princeton Theological Seminary, describes as “confusion about what it means to be a pastor.” Are they spiritual directors, pastoral care givers, community leaders and managers of non-profit organizations? Have pastors become, as Eugene Peterson suggests, “shopkeepers” catering to spiritual consumers?

Two books published in the summer of 2015 offer the same answer to the question, what are pastors? Theological professors Kevin Vanhoozer and Owen Strachan in *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision*, and pastors Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson in *The Pastor-Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision* contend pastors will find their identity as theologians. Congregational clergy, whether they want the role or not, are the >

THEOLOGY, continued

theological consciences of their congregations. Vanhoozer writes: “The pastor-theologian does not have a unique professional or clinical skill but is rather the theological conscience of the church and thus understands everything in biblical-theological context and in relation to what God is doing in Jesus Christ.” The pastor’s commission is assisting individuals and congregations to find their place in God’s story of redemption and renewal, the story of what God has done/is doing/will do in Christ. A task no other vocational group in our culture is doing.

The pastor as theologian was an important model in the church until the early 19th century. Since then, the pastor-theologian has been downplayed and even undermined. The result being, theology has become the domain of academic theologians in universities, while pastors do the practical work of leading churches.

This division of labour divorces theological discussion from the life of the church. No longer do church concerns drive the theological conversation, and the theological conversation often fails to touch the life of the church. I remember being told by a theological college professor that my academic writing was not “just academic history;” instead, this professor said, “you write to say something to the church.” Clearly, academic writing that speaks to the church is an exception rather than common practice.

THE DIVORCE HAS IMPACTED THE CHURCH, Hiestand and Wilson argue: “The church, led by a pastoral community that no longer conceives of itself in theological terms, has lost its distinctive Christian ethical framework.” Addressing this loss requires reclaiming the role of pastor-theologian. Three types of pastor-theologian are described.

First, all pastors are called to be “local theologians”—pastors who reflect theologically on the realities of life in their community and in the lives of congregational members.

A second type is the “popular theologian” who writes (including blogging) for a general audience, both within and outside the church. I served in a community where a rota of clergy wrote weekly reflections for the local newspaper’s “church page,” giving opportunity for pastor-theologians to be heard outside their congregations, becoming public theologians. Not all pastors are called to this role, but

congregations should encourage pastor-theologians with the inclination and the opportunity to speak/write in wider public contexts to do so.

The final category, “ecclesial theologian” engages in academic theological debate always grounded in their life as parish pastors. Heistand and Wilson write: “Pastors, not professors, are the theological leaders of the church. Despite assumptions to the contrary, the pastoral office retains the

burden of the church’s theological leadership.” Again not all pastors are called to be ecclesial theologians, those who have an important calling which their congregations are invited to support and share in.

Unfortunately Hiestand and Todd’s book is marred by the authors’ continual use of male pronouns when referring to pastors. It is hoped this off-putting practice will not prevent readers from taking seriously the call for pastors, both women and men, to claim their identity as their congregation’s theologians.

Vanhoozer and Strachan’s book has no such problems. The chapters by Kevin Vanhoozer, in particular, are worth re-reading and digesting deeply. Vanhoozer and Strachan invited a dozen pastors to contribute short pieces describing the

ways in which they have claimed the role of pastor-theologian. A number of these reflections are both moving and instructive.

These books offer practical suggestions to congregations desiring to encourage the pastor-theologians in their midst.

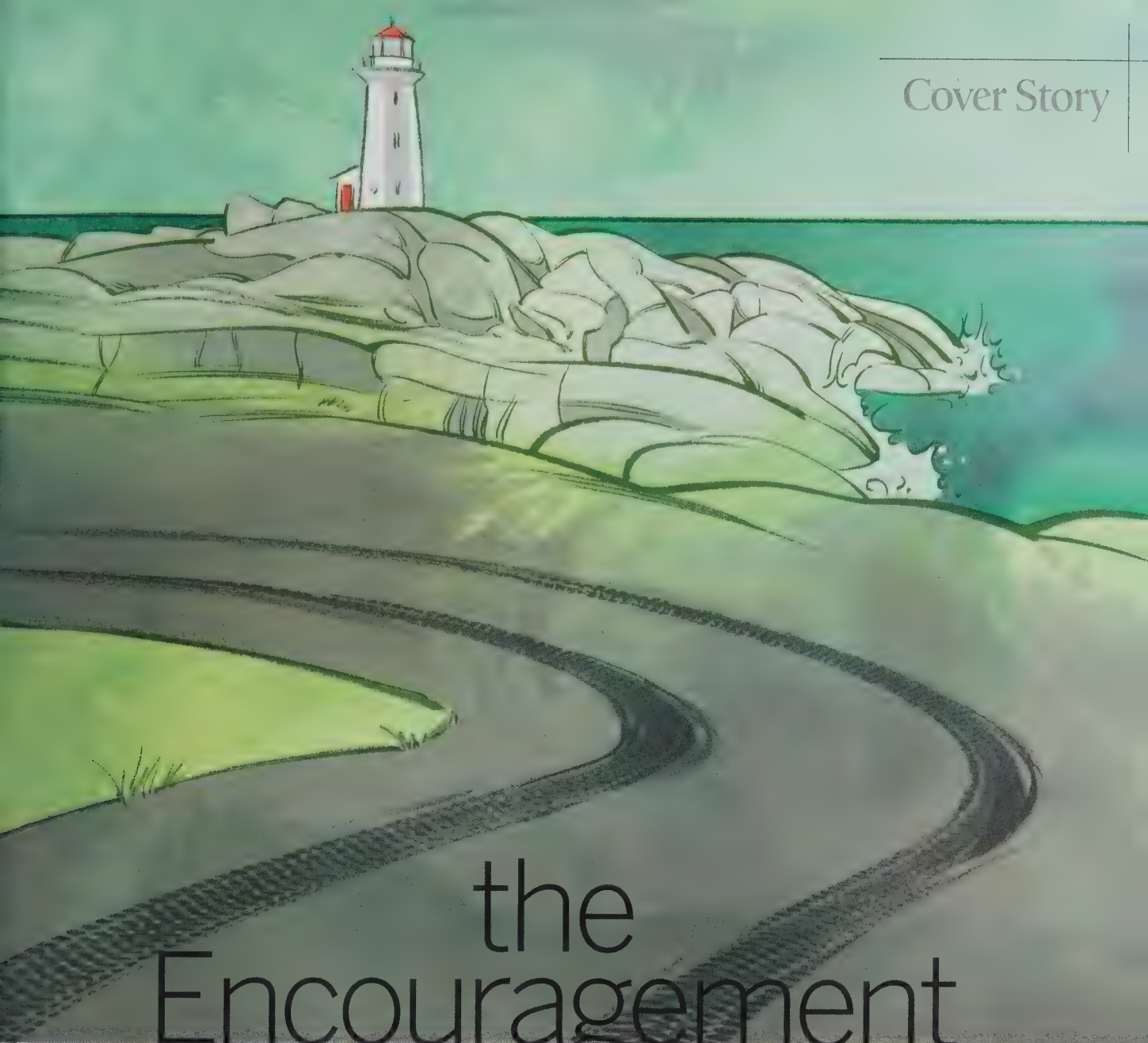
Congregations are invited to value and guard the time their minister spends in theological reflection. Such reflection enriches preaching, teaching and pastoral care, and will ground the pastor-theologian in their unique calling.

Church attenders are invited to ask their ministers questions like: “What are you reading these days?” and “What questions are you asking because of your reading?” The questioners need to take the time to listen to the answers pastor-theologians give.

As ministers claim their role as pastor-theologians, they will discover who they have been called to be: people who declare what is in Christ and what that means for individuals, for the church, and for the world. +

Rev. Peter Bush is minister at Westwood, Winnipeg.

The pastor as theologian was an important model in the church until the early 19th century. Since then, the pastor-theologian has been downplayed and even undermined.



the Encouragement TOUR

Fred Stewart travels the country
listening to ministers.

by **ANDREW FAIZ** illustrations **KAGAN MCLEOD**





SOMETIME IN THE SPRING, Rev. Fred Stewart will get in his car and drive for hundreds, even thousands of kilometres, stopping as often as he is invited to do so to have a coffee or a meal with a minister or a prayer group, participate in worship, or all of the above. He's been doing this for a while. In 2014 he went to points west meeting as many people as he could from Ontario to British Columbia. In 2015 it was to the east, to the Maritime provinces. Over the years he has clocked more than 30,000 kilometres by air and road, met more than 100 ministers and heard a lot of stories.

"I've met with some men and some women together and then a lot of one-on-ones. I found that in the one-on-ones, if it's not somebody in my close circle, not somebody with whom I had any role in governance or through any committee work, all of a sudden, there was this willingness to open up and to share at incredibly deep levels," he tells me. We are sitting in a restaurant that has been converted into a church—The Silver Spur is now Woodville Community, not far from Lake Simcoe in the Kawarthas in Ontario.

Stewart is minister at Woodville, along with St. Andrew's, Bolsover, a 15-minute drive directly north on County Road 46. He is also the executive director of the Renewal Fellowship within the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and a columnist in this magazine.

Stewart started his role with the fellowship in the fall of 2011. Part of the call process was an examination of his gifts and passions for ministry. A key component from day one was a passion for encouraging ministers. In the first two years there were quite a few opportunities to do so as he travelled on behalf of the fellowship. It became a bigger and bigger part of his vocation and purpose. In 2014 he pitched an Encouragement Road Trip to the board, members and friends. Emails, prayers and donations broadly supported the initiative.

"It allowed me to go to many places with this message: 'There are people all over the country that have sponsored this trip so that I could come and speak words of encouragement to you. You are loved and are prayed for.'"

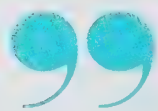
With the additional blessings of his congregations, he has travelled to every province, just to have coffee, often with people he's never met before. "The average life of those meetings is somewhere over two hours. Because the minute the conversation is entered, something happens. I think it's something redemptive that happens. But there is this freedom that just pours out of people and it has nothing to do with where they come from theologically, has nothing to do with what they think of the Renewal Fellowship, nothing to do with male or female, rural, East Coast, West Coast, Central Canada. There is this commonality of 'I can talk to somebody; this is a situation where I am free to actually talk.'"

You talk most often of loneliness?, I ask him in the café church.

"Yes, isolation, loneliness, or sometimes mistrust of peers and distrust of presbytery. Often a story of, 'They've done me wrong,' either the >



The health
of our congregations
is certainly limited
by the health of
our ministers.
And the health of
our denomination
is inextricably tied
to the same thing.



COVER STORY, continued

congregation or the presbytery. Often a hurt that hasn't been addressed or healed. But even people who are very active in very active churches in very active parts of the country often tell me how lonely they are and how they would do almost anything to assuage the loneliness except take enough time and risk to initiate a meaningful relationship."

Presbytery! I can't think of many conversations I've had with ministers who speak of presbytery with fondness. Individuals feel crushed; initiatives seem thwarted. Most express dissatisfaction, a few indifference and virtually none appreciation. It is discussed constantly as one of the greatest stresses in a minister's life, let alone career.

"There is a definite difference between ministers talking about individuals in the presbytery and The Presbytery," says Stewart. "All across the country, when a minister talks about presbytery, often it's with reservation, it's with suspicion, and it's with the sense, 'I would never, ever open up to them ...' because it reveals weakness. The very thing a minister is trying to accomplish in his congregation, to get people to be a real community, which means being transparent, being vulnerable, taking chances in relationship. There is no depth to a relationship if people are not prepared to risk."

So, I ask him the obvious question: "You've spoken to about 100 ministers. Do you sense about half of them are whiny, victimy people?"

"No," he replies. "No, that would be a real minority. I would say the vast majority are sincere; they are unhappy; they are discouraged. They're often stuck in feeling they're limited in terms of what they can do in their ministry. Feeling they're limited in terms of what changes they can make. More and more are feeling trapped in that there are no moves that are available to them. Not feeling fulfilled in their ministry. So, it's hopelessness that permeates more and more of their life."

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT STUDIES on clergy health and each of them has the same sort of statistics to report. One done in 2006 by the Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development lays out some of the often repeated details: 90 per cent of pastors stated they were frequently fatigued; 89 per cent have considered leaving the calling; 57 per cent said they would if they could find a better job; 77 per cent said they did not have a good marriage; 75 per cent said they were unqualified or poorly trained; 71 per cent said they felt burned out, or depressed; 23 per cent said they felt happy or content in their life and their work.

This certainly challenges the common impression of the lives of ministers. Several generations grew up under the concept of the minister as earthly embodiment of the Kingdom—a concept that was helped along by many ministers who believed their own mythology. Those days are gone. The supports a minister could take for granted—a stay-at-home spouse, a large team of paid and volunteer workers, a common cultural language, centrality of church in society, in short, Christendom—are gone. What we have instead is a simple understanding that we are all travelling together on our journey with and towards God.

To be fair, this may more accurately be called a professional syndrome than limited to those working in ministry. School teachers across Canada, for example, who are represented by the collective power of a union, have long highlighted overwork and stress as issues. The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario has a checklist on its website which lists hours and workload and includes "unreasonable expectations."

It's not an easy job being a minister. I don't know of a single job where one person is asked to wear as many hats—to be a teacher, a pastor, a preacher, a guidance counsellor, a therapist, a spiritual adviser, a friend, a comfort, a manager, an administrator, a visionary, a moderator, and much more. And in these years of declining memberships there is additional congregational anxiety which is placed on the ministers.

It's not a nine-to-five job, either. Between the congregation's and the presbyter's expectations, a minister can be out of the house more than 40 hours a week, and that may not include Sunday worship preparations. This puts pressure on family. And let's be honest, the pay's not great. For the stress and education, other careers have better financial returns.

Is the health of our ministers a metaphor for a larger crisis?, I ask Stewart.

"Absolutely," he replies. "The health of our congregations is certainly limited by the health of our ministers. And the health of our denomination is inextricably tied to the same thing. The text that is heard across this country is that the churches are dying therefore we don't have any options open to us. We're accepting a text of hopelessness. It's a dangerous generalisation because it's a) not true, but b) by actually recounting it, it actually becomes true."

And so the Road to Encouragement, and as successful and valid and vital as that ministry is, Stewart is aware it's not the solution. "People need one person other than their spouse and outside of their church, or part of their governance, with whom they can be absolutely real; that they're not wearing a mask, they're not putting on a drama. One person with whom they're actually willing to say what they fear and what they seek.

"That ideal is tough to reach, but there needs to be an opportunity at least monthly to sit with people who share the same kinds of challenges and the same kinds of ups and downs."

Stewart likes the colleague covenant group grants (a well-kept secret he calls them) offered by national offices. The grant site says a covenant group is a safe place for ministerial colleagues to "pray together ... to tell it like it is."

Last year Rev. Matthew Ruttan wrote in this magazine of a clergy care committee at Westminster, Barrie, Ont., where he is the minister. (Stewart suggests congregations have a "human relations committee.") That too sounds like a great idea; along with ministers being honest with each other, it seems to me, the congregation also needs to understand its role. All three of our theological colleges have

various clergy care programs. There are mentoring groups in some presbyteries.

There are obvious limitations in all of these approaches—safe environments that are neither vapid nor antiseptic are very difficult to maintain; a covenant group needs strong and fair leadership; mentors need to be matched with extreme care to mentees—but they are great starts. This is not the first article the *Record* has published on this theme; previous articles have been received well but also elicited harsh backlash.


Thinking of those articles, and my own conversations with dozens of ministers over the years, I think the story is bigger than a covenant group issue.

"I think there is a crumbling idea of call; I think there is a crumbling idea of job versus ministry; I think there is a crumbling idea of what are the things that the minister could do that would make a difference," says Stewart.

I would add, there is a crumbling idea called Christendom. Not so long ago, though further back in time than most think, the church sat in the middle of the main thoroughfare and all who travelled through the town had to pass through the church. You can still see some of those churches around the world, towering over the central square. Over time, though, the main road moved, not just around the church but often to a whole other part of town.

Many inside those echoing buildings, in a trance of their idolatrous glory-days memories, are still waiting for the townsfolk to walk through their cobwebbed entrances. A lot of those expectations have been placed on their one remaining employee, the person they're paying to do something. The minister, in turn, doesn't want to disappoint; they tend to be pleasers, and this is their livelihood. There's the cycle.

A study done at Knox College, Toronto, published about a decade ago, concluded: "At the very core of the crisis among clergy is the question of identity. 'Who am I—as a person—as a minister—as a religious leader in a culture in transition?' This is a question that must be an ongoing area of enquiry for the minister. ... The neatly defined person of the early days of ministry may now seem a seething bed of conflicting ideologies causing the person to raise questions of one's own integrity and belief."

Fred Stewart's encouragement tour is a welcome respite for many. It needs follow up; and that is in everybody else's hands. 

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

FROM THE MODERATOR

Our Beloved Buildings

Do they help or hinder effective ministry? *by* KAREN HORST



Does your church building match your mission goals? Are you able to honour your central calling as a congregation in your present facility? How we love our buildings! How we cherish the memories, history and experiences that linger in the pews, walls and very fabric of the place! Perhaps our children were baptized and married there. Some were confirmed, and said farewell to loved ones within those beloved walls.

Where I minister at St. Andrew's, Orillia, Ont., our building's architecture is stunning and of historical value to the community. It would be irreplaceable. The rich wood, the 95-year-old Casavant organ, the beautiful balconies; these would not be built today. And they share the building generously with the community. On any given day there are AA groups, community seniors, hospital teams, mayor's events, transitional housing programs, etc., helping to meet our goals of partnership with community care providers and specifically, helpful work with seniors. Down the road we may even venture into a phase of seniors' ministry by providing affordable housing. Our buildings should never become an end in themselves. Buildings can hollow out congregations. When all their time is spent fundraising for upkeep and insurance and no energy remains for sharing the gospel, then the tail is wagging the dog.

I had the privilege to travel to British Columbia to see a variety of new


Buildings can hollow out congregations. When all their time is spent fundraising for upkeep and no energy remains for sharing the gospel, then the tail is wagging the dog.

buildings designed to better serve the goals of sharing the gospel specific to each context. I participated in the dedication of Calvin Church in Abbotsford, a beautiful, large building erected by a worshipping congregation of 130. I was not able to attend the ground-breaking at Central Church in Vancouver, but I heard all about their exciting project of building a 22-unit condo that will include their new church on lower floors. I was delighted to see the transformation of St. Andrew's Hall at the Vancouver School of Theology after the sale of the "castle," its original home. And St. Andrew's Church in Nanaimo, now 26 years old, is still a testament to a congregation who risked designing a new, open, inviting sanctuary which they share with a Korean congregation.

All of these ventures have in common a willingness to let go of a cherished building to more effectively do

ministry. Consistently, it took key people with specialized gifts plus plenty of volunteers to make the project work. It took tenacity and patience to reach completion. In Abbotsford, the build happened 20 years after the dream. A successful build requires participants to have a shared vision and be wisely courageous and fiscally responsible. These buildings declare a theology of availability. Plenty of windows look out to the world. Multipurpose in design, the spaces are used in numerous ways. Most involve partnerships where the church is used by more than one worshipping community, and in Abbotsford's case, at the same time. The buildings speak to the interrelationship of worship, service and community. The sanctuary's layout and the building itself speaks volumes about the types of worship that can be celebrated.

Now I am not suggesting that everyone build a new building. What I am suggesting is we all reflect on our congregation's ability to reinvent itself to honour the gospel and to do ministry, not house-keeping. New or old, our buildings are a blessing when they serve kingdom purposes. They become a mixed blessing when they begin to own us.

Take time to reflect on how your building helps or hinders your kingdom goals. (Try reading 1 Kings 6:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 3:16.) 

Rev. Karen Horst is minister at St. Andrew's, Orillia, Ont.

People & Places

Find more online at presbyterianrecord.ca

Photographs can be uploaded at presbyterianrecord.ca.



KNOX, HARRINGTON, ONT.

Knox welcomed eight new members in December 2015. Some of them are part of the church's young disciples group, and the slightly less young disciples joined through professions of faith or transfers of membership. Pictured in the back row are Russell Steele, Ian Camden, Cheyenne Camden, Amy Camden, and Matthew Thomson, and in the front row are Brenda Steele, Ty Camden, Lily Camden, Alicia Thomson, and Evan Thomson.



LEASIDE, TORONTO

Rev. Bill Elliott (centre) retired at the end of October 2015, but not before his work and ministry were celebrated by the congregation and his colleagues, Revs. Nick Athanasiadis and Angela Cluney.



WEST FLAMBORO, DUNDAS, ONT.

In February, the congregation of West Flamboro bid farewell to Kyle Dore and his wife, Janelle (centre) as they embarked on new adventures in ministry. Dore headed up the family and outreach program at the church for 18 months, but left to accept a call to his first charge as a minister of word and sacraments. He was ordained on Feb. 28. Congratulations, Rev. Dore. We're sure the kids at West Flamboro will miss you—but at least they got some cake.

THE OTHER SIX DAYS

Aaron's Underpants

Lots of laughs and a little satire. *by* **BRADLEY CHILDS**

YOUTUBE

John Crist grew up in the American South. He was homeschooled along with seven other siblings. His father is a minister. John, however, is a comedian and a good one at that. What makes him unique though is that his act is really clean. Now that doesn't mean that he only does Christian comedy; he's on the regular circuit. But it does mean that who he is, namely a Christian, affects how he views comedy. John is the guy I've mentioned before, who made those fake "Christian Mingle" clips where he interviewed new people on the dating website to make sure they were "Christian enough" before allowing them to search for a match. In this month's clip, Crist looks at the strange language Christian communities have created. He wondered if people had any idea what Christians mean by some of the phrases unique to our communities, so he asked them. So just what do people who weren't raised in the church think a "love offering" is? Watch to find out!

FIND IT @ YouTube.com. Search for "People guess what Christian phrases mean."

THE WORDS WE USE

When it comes to human sexuality issues, one thing is for sure: we don't know much, but we sure do know how to put our feet in our mouths. One of the difficulties is that some of this just seems so new to many of us, and the language is particularly striking. An old friend of mine from college considers himself a "Q Two-Spirit Person," and another friend of mine has a daughter

who is a "transwoman," but those terms are confusing to many. Sometimes even the use of a word depends upon your sensitivities and upon how "insider" or "outsider" you are or you appear to be. Luckily for me, my old "Two Spirit" pal hooked me up with a helpful glossary so I can keep from embarrassing myself less often as I attempt to converse with

So what do people who
weren't raised
in the church think
a 'love offering' is?
Watch to find out!

people about LGBTQ issues. I think it helped me. I hope it helps you, too.

FIND IT @ community.pflag.org/glossary.

FUN BIBLE VERSES

At Andrew Faiz's request, here are some fun Bible verses for the church at large: Ever wonder about Job's relationship with his wife, or perhaps what it's like living with a guy who doesn't own a toothbrush? In Job 19:17, he tells us. It says: "My breath is repulsive to my wife; I am loathsome to my own family."

Have you ever felt like the traffic in your city is crazy? You're not the only one. George Carlin once said: "Have you ever noticed that anybody driving slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster than you is a maniac?" Well, the Bible said

it first. In 2 Kings 9:20, the lookout evaluating someone else's chariot driving skills says: "He reached them, but he is not coming back. It looks like the driving of Jehu son of Nimshi; for he drives like a maniac." "Jehu son of Nimshi!" you say. That's what I'm going to scream at the next guy who cuts me off. Try it. You might like it.


With that in mind, the next time I meet a hunter, I plan on praising them the way a warrior did in the olden days with, "Why you hunt like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord!" (Genesis 10:6-20)

Ever wonder about Moses and Aaron's underpants? Of course you have. Want to know what they looked like? Look it up. Exodus 39:1-5.

CHRISTIAN SATIRE

Ever since the old *Wittenburg Door* went the way of the dodo bird, Christian satirists like me have been clamouring for a replacement. That day has come. *The Babylon Bee* is a goofy Christian faux-news organization with great stories the likes of which have not been seen since one Brad Childs co-ran *The Realist*, a monthly underground university satirical.

The Babylon Bee has such recent gems as, "The Power of Positive Declarations: Joel Osteen can now fly," and "Trump sees poll numbers plummet as Yosemite Sam enters the GOP race." I love it! I wonder if they're hiring?

FIND IT @ babylonbee.com. 

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at Fairview, Vancouver, as of April 3.

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Barber, Rev. William M., passed away peacefully at Spruce Lodge in Stratford, Ont., on Sunday, January 17, 2016 in his 89th year.

Loving husband of Laura Barber (née Urquhart) for 55 years; dear father of Neil and Marie Mitchell of Walton, Ont., and son Daryl; proud Grandpa Bill to Emily, Sean, Sarah and Claire Mitchell. Also survived by nieces and nephews Bob and Sharon Matthews, Grant Matthews (Durham, Ont.), Dr. June Matthews and Ibrahim Moharram (London, Ont.), Gerald and Mary Golem (Chesley, Ont.) and their families as well as sisters-in-law Leila Kjarside (Vancouver B.C.), Eileen Urquhart (Moose Creek, Ont.), Violet Urquhart (Cornwall, Ont.) and their families. Predeceased by parents Harold and Charlotte (Porter) Barber, brother-in-law and sister Art and Islay Matthews, nephew Keith Matthews, brothers- and sisters-in-law Donald Urquhart, Wilmer and Mary Urquhart, Christina Hanna, Kris Kjarside and Allan Urquhart.

Bill was born in Normanby Township in Grey County, Ont., in 1927. In the late 1950s he left the family farm and pursued an education, as he felt called to the ministry. He graduated from Presbyterian College in Montreal in 1966. Bill served his ordained missionary appointment in Melfort, Sask. He also served in St. Andrew's and Southminster in Brandon, Man., and Knox in Lloydminster, Alta. Returning to Ontario in 1984 Bill served in First Seaforth, St. Andrew's, Clinton, and Livingston Presbyterian, Baden, before retiring to Bayfield where he provided supply at Knox for seven years.

The funeral service was held at Knox Presbyterian Church, Cranbrook, on Thursday, January 21 (spring interment at Maplewood Cemetery near Durham). Memorial donations to Ronald McDonald House of Southwestern Ontario or Evangel Hall Mission would be greatly appreciated. Messages of condolence for the Barber and Mitchell families may be sent to falconerfuneralhomes.com.

Herbison, Rev. Donald James, a respected member and retired minister of visitation of Knox Presbyterian Church, Dundas, Ont., died August 17, 2015.

Don served God in a most sincere, faithful and devoted manner over the years in Sutton, Erin, and Ospringe, Erskine, Hamilton, and Knox, Dundas, as well as clerk of presbytery for 35 years in the Brampton and Hamilton areas.

Don was a loving husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather. "Well done, good and faithful servant."



Pearce, John French,

died peacefully in his 101st year in Guelph, Ont. As a member of Rockwood Presbyterian

Church, John served as Sunday school superintendent, clerk of session and representative elder to presbytery. After retirement, John and his wife Myra attended Knox Presbyterian Church in Goderich. When they returned to Guelph in 1990, St. Andrew's became their home church.

With an easy laugh and a quick smile, John would light up a room with his charm and wit. As a humble man of faith, character and integrity, he was a sterling example.

His light will shine in the memories of all who knew him. ☦

Obitaries

FOR THE JOURNEY

Born Again

Rebirth in the church in the 21st century, part one. *by* DAVID WEBBER

SOME QUESTION IF THE Christian church in the West is dying out in this century. In the Canadian context, across denominations, the church appears to be shrinking in almost every way—in our small Presbytery of Kamloops alone, two out of 10 congregations closed in 2015.

On another level, however, I'm excited by what I see. I am convinced that the Lord of the Church, who promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18), is reforming or rebirthing his church. The question is, what will the born again church be like?

The church of Jesus Christ was conceived at Easter and given birth by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. I think this process and its result is prescriptive for the church. That is, I think we can know what the born again church will be like by looking at the church in the New Testament.

That early church was largely a small group of risk-taking, countercultural, often-persecuted followers of Jesus. It remained so for about two and a half centuries.

When Constantine became emperor in the third century, things began to change radically. For a variety of reasons, many of them not entirely altruistic, Constantine favoured the Christian faith. The church underwent radical change as it quickly became the dominant religion of the Roman Empire and was eventually declared the state church by official edict in 380 CE.

This Christendom church reached its institutional peak in the mid-17th century and then, as it fully embraced the modernity of the various Enlightenment movements as authoritative, perhaps more so than the Word of God, it



began a serious decline that we are still reaping the fruits of today.

It seems to be bitter fruit. But if Christ is rebirthing the church to the counterculture, small group, risk-taking community of Jesus as witnessed in the New Testament, the fruit seems bitter only because it is not yet fully formed. Fully formed, this born again church is bound to see dramatic changes, especially with regards to buildings, leadership, sacraments, and mission. I want to ponder this change in my articles between Easter and Pentecost.

A SURVEY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS and Paul's epistles shows that in the New Testament church, for

the main part there were no dedicated church buildings. History can attest that sometime after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE and the Jewish war with Rome was lost, one of the results was the "birkat ha-minim" or the reading in synagogue each Sabbath of a benediction against heretics. Christians often found themselves read out of the synagogue, something that perhaps started even earlier in Jesus' day (John 9:22, 12:42, 16:2). If they had not been doing so before, certainly they now had to meet in small groups primarily in believers' homes. Roman persecution of Christians during the same time further pushed Christians to the fringe of society and made house churches not only the norm but usually the only choice. This house church reality is what is reflected in the New Testament, and it is the biblical norm for Christ's church (Romans 16:3-16). In this apostolic form, what mattered to the church were small, intimate, intentional faith communities gathered around the Word of God and the Lord's Table in believers' homes ➤



FOR THE JOURNEY, continued

(Acts 2:42).

Centuries later, with the declaration of Christianity as the faith of the Empire, suddenly the basilica became a reality for the radically changed church. Elaborate church buildings became central to the notion and experience of church. Building placement in a community needed to be central and prominent. The building became the prime focus and asset for the church. For the main part, this has continued.

However, in this day and age as Christian congregations decline in numbers, the building very often has become a financial albatross. I would contend though that the church building really has been an albatross from the get-go, not because of finances but because of what it has done to the formation of the faith community and its mission. Buildings have demanded the church form large congregations, gatherings that tend to end up becoming what Karl Jung critiqued as “mere collectivities.” This sadly has become normative rather than the small, intentional, intimate faith communities housed in believers’ homes as in the New Testament. Church buildings quickly become the focus of a congregation’s energy, resources and *raison d’être* rather than the formation of small, intimate, risk-taking faith communities with a radical counterculture mission for Christ in the world.

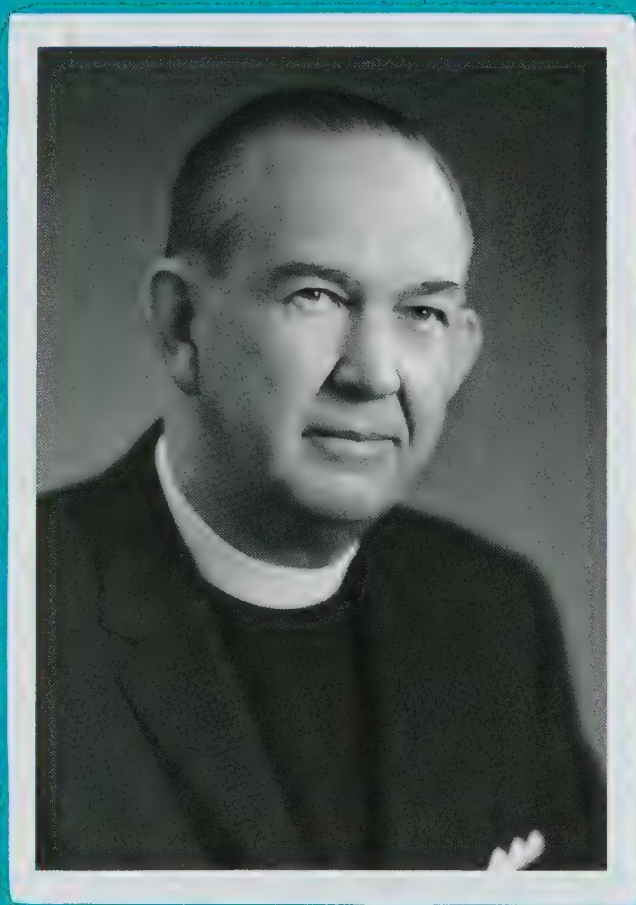
In the church that is being born again into this century, I believe dedicated church buildings will once again cease to be normative for the church. All kinds of radical change will result. For example, we will rediscover that in reality our congregations are made up of small groups and that the congregation exists for the sake of the small group not the small group for the sake of the congregation. Presbyteries will cease to close congregations because

they are small whilst keeping their buildings. Rather they will close buildings and sell them to keep and cherish the small congregation, howbeit housed differently. Presbyteries will no longer allow congregations to keep their buildings as they dismiss their teaching elders due to tight finances. No longer will 30 or fewer believers be allowed to gather weekly in cold church buildings to stare at the backs of one another’s heads and sink into an ill-informed faith. Presbyteries and congregations will once again come to favour a church of Jesus built entirely with human bricks.

During our more than a quarter-century experience of house churches in our region, we have between 10 to 40 people per house church gathering weekly in warm homes and we look one another square in the eye as we proceed in our Berean way to carefully consider together, discuss and interpret everything that is taught from scripture. Without a building there is no need for all the committees and headaches associated with the institution and its physical plant. People are liberated to dedicate themselves to Christ and the formation of intimate faith community whilst discerning the Word and Christ’s mission for their world and its culture. It is the New Testament example; the biblical norm. Congregations without buildings or at the very least congregations intentionally not building-focused, will become normative for the born again church.

To be continued... +

Rev. David Webber, now retired, was the founding missionary in B.C.’s Cariboo house church ministry. His most recent book, When the Aspen Flowers, can be ordered through webberink@telus.net.



"Presbyterians claim to believe in the priesthood of all believers.
If this means anything at all, it means that the ministry
of the church is not restricted to the pulpit,
it extends to every member in the pew."

—DeCourcy H. Rayner

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‘It would be like a soccer team that stopped playing soccer years ago, and who instead gathers for coffee and donuts with friends and family.’

FOR THE RECORD

Try Different Things

As long as there are two or more in Jesus’ name. *by* **DAVID HARRIS**

Imagine someone is looking for a church,” writes Rev. Erik Parker, a Lutheran blogger. “They are looking for a church with a commitment to following Jesus at its core and they show up at a social commitment church. It would be like showing up for a soccer team that stopped playing soccer years ago, and who instead gathers for coffee and donuts with friends and family.”

Most of us probably know congregations like this. It’s easy to become inward looking—concerned more about how we feel than how newcomers feel; concerned more about our buildings than about building a community where people experience God’s love through our deeds.

“As churches try to understand why all the attempts to attract people back to church haven’t yielded better results,” Parker writes, “I think it is because the core foundation that brings most church communities together is fundamentally at odds with what people who are looking for churches are seeking today.”

As Andrew Faiz says in his essay on Missional Church this month: “The model of church we’re all comfortable with, and comfortable in, with our own comfortable pews and comfortable habits—is known as ‘Attractional.’ As in, ‘Hey, look at us, we have good stuff for you inside our fortress.’”

But that’s the love-our-church model, not the love-Jesus model. Both models are important, in different ways.

One church may focus on doing things so that worshippers feel good

about the experience. That’s OK. That’s a maintenance model.


Another might focus on a ministry to aging members who have historical roots in the church. That’s OK, for them.

For example, take a church in Lake Nokomis, in the Minneapolis metropolitan area of more than four million. In seven years, no one had joined the church. There were no children. They had 30 people on Sunday where once there had been 300. The endowment fund could keep them going for maybe another two years. What to do?

On the first and third Sundays of the month, they have a traditional service. On alternate weekends, there is a Saturday evening contemplative service, but Sunday is a sabbath—a rest from work and formal worship.

One member, quoted in a story about the church, said she settles down with a cup of coffee and reads the Sunday *New York Times*. “The whole thing.” (That must be one mammoth coffee!)

The point is that the way we build a Christian community will vary from place to place. Permission to experiment! Try different things. As Parker says: “It isn’t that a church has to choose between being a community or following Jesus. One doesn’t exclude the other.”

“Where two or three are gathered, there am I.” That’s what he said. 

David Harris is the Record’s publisher and editor.

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Contributors



SALINA VANDERHORN has been designing for the *Record* for five years. She is an art director, designer and thinker. She is passionate about learning, great content and things that work. She's been called an epic problem solver and an embarrassingly large amount of her time is spent being an internet nerd, satisfying her compulsively curious nature.

NAM SOON SONG is Ewart professor of Christian education and youth ministry, and director of the Centre for Asian-Canadian Theology and Ministry at Knox College, Toronto. With her husband, Rev. Wan Tae Oh, she continues to develop Antioch Community Church, embracing all people in Oakville, Ont.



VIVIAN KETCHUM was born in Kenora, Ont., and is a member of the Wauzhushk Onigum Nation. She lives and works in Winnipeg. She is a mother of three and became a new grandmother last year.

She is a freelance writer who has contributed journalism, poetry and memoir to the *Record* for many years. She also writes for Community News Common, an online forum in Winnipeg. Last year she was awarded a Citizen

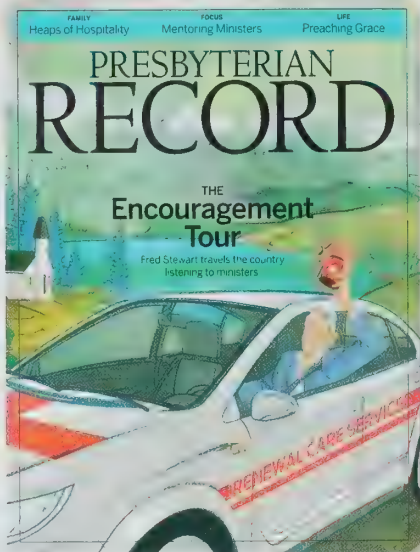


Journalism Award.

She sits on the board of Winnipeg Inner-City Missions and is a member of the Life and Mission Agency committee.

Ketchum owns three cats and wonders if they actually own her.

Letters



Write to us: LETTERS@PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA

A word from the senior editor:

Letters about human sexuality issues far outnumber all other correspondence received by the Record over the past year. Nary a week passes before another one to four are added. A few beg for considered conversation and are reasonable in their tone. They are all passionate; and most are one-sided. And the ones received so far this year tend to end with a threat to

leave the denomination if their point of view, whether for or against, does not win the day. We could fill a whole issue with nothing but these letters.

We're not going to. And with apologies to all, we are holding a moratorium on these letters in the magazine. However we will post them on our website. To allow one we have to allow all—we cannot judge and pick the ones we like. This is

the magazine for the whole church.

It has been our experience in the past that even the most evenly toned letter will generate a passionate rant immediately.

The website is open, as is the Facebook page. The conversations there have been heated at times. The editorial staff steps in to moderate now and then. Those forums are immediate. In the magazine's letters section, we'd like to focus on some of the other issues facing our denomination. We will include further news and features on sexuality in our editorial coverage.

ANDREW FAIZ

I and Thou

Re Pop Christianity, April and March

Thank you for your article, especially in regards to relationships. It reminds me of the work of Martin Buber on dialogue between people being the sign of an encounter between I and Thou instead of the usual I and It encounters. Conversation is, literally, a turning toward one another. I think these are helpful metaphors and I appreciate your connection between them and what discussions are actually happening in the church.

JOSHUA WERESCH, HAMILTON, ONT.

Pastor Shep



Thank you for writing the article on newcomers and the welcoming styles of churches. We really have forgotten the excitement of the gospel. One of the CEOs of a Las Vegas casino always said hospitality begins by opening the casino door for each customer. The CEO did a study that found people stayed longer and spent more money if someone greeted them at the door. If the customers had to open the door to the casino themselves, they stayed a shorter length of time and spent less money. The church should already have this as part of their tradition; opening the door for the newcomer and greeting them with a welcome.

LORNA BALL, BRANDON, MAN.

Master Storytellers

Re Sharing Witness

I am so glad you are writing these articles, Vivian Ketchum. I am learning so much from them.

CATHIE MORGAM MATULA, ONLINE

Thanks for sharing your journey, Vivian. You have told a portion of your story with wisdom and grace.

MARION WARREN, ONLINE

Re A Canadian Love Story, February

Great story with a finish that takes it to the next level of master class storytelling! Thank you, David Webber.

MARK CARTER, ONLINE

Re Web Tech and Worship, Online Blog

I continue to learn lots with each new blog. Thanks Wayne Sankaral!

BLAIR BANKS, ONLINE

Re Sun Dog Morning, Passionately His, Online Blog

Thank you, Jeff Loach for this reflection and beautiful picture of a "sun dog." I learned a new expression.

My dear dad used to say, "I won't die

today because I learned a new word." So I guess I'm safe for the day.

Your text and the questions will guide my meditation today for I love counting my blessings.

DESNEIGES PÉLOQUIN, ONLINE

That Was Then

Re New Members at St. Marks, Don Mills, March

Apr 7, 1963: Knox, Walkerton, Ont., received 24 youth members—six by adult baptism and 18 by personal confession of vows.

[A photo of this event] was sent to the *Record*. The then editor, DeCourcy Rayner, returned the photograph, writing: "There were too many such items." And thanked me for my interest in the *Record*.

ROBERT A. B. MACLEAN,
WALKERTON, ONT.

Andrew Faiz replies: Dear Rev. MacLean, I cannot speak for the past editor, but as a journalist I understand. It is much rarer today than in '63 to have a large contingent of youth take confession by faith. ☕

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POP CHRISTIANITY

A Closed Triangle

Moving beyond the brand. *by* ANDREW FAIZ

Sitting at the table are 10 people, all active members of a Presbyterian Church in Canada congregation. Some are elders, the others participate in worship.

Three are children of Presbyterian ministers. One is a Presbyterian minister. Two are Anglicans, one a Brethren, one a Baptist. The last two are default Presbyterians through immigration.

This is a snapshot of a typical Protestant congregation today, which is likely to have more people attending on a Sunday who have no strong denominational ties. They are there because they feel embraced by the local congregation. They are not there, necessarily, because they have a strong affiliation to a denomination. They will stay at the congregation because of its community, and also because they feel comforted by, and perhaps even challenged by, worship.

Of the 10 people at that table, easily five are not that engaged in denominational issues. They see their membership as mostly with the congregation. They are not too interested in polity or doctrine. They're also not that interested in denominational structures. Again, the relationship is with the local church.

That is what church means to most people in the pews. That there are institutional structures outside of the local building is not very interesting to most members and attendees.

They are less likely to worry about denominational issues. Less likely to



They will stay at the congregation because of its community, and also because they feel comforted by, and perhaps even challenged by, worship.

subscribe to the denominational publication; oh, they'll read it if it comes to the house, but they're not likely to seek it out. Less likely to know about other branches of the church—a relief agency or colleges or other programs.

They sought a church to further develop their relationship with God. They stayed at the one that developed a relationship with them. Their triangle


is closed. No more is necessary. (Of course, the big question is what is at the apex of the triangle: God, Self or Congregation.)

So, yeah, "Presbyterian" is a brand. The title meant something, not just about theology and polity, but also about culture and nationalism. It was tribal. And, so, the death of the brand is a good thing, in a way.

That doesn't mean denominations are generic. Not at all. They still have their identities, of sorts, a sense of uniqueness. It does mean they are, in a way, ahistorical. A denomination can no longer assume its members share a common past, or a common identity.

This also means each appeal from the denomination—whether from the *Record* or Presbyterian World Service & Development, for example—has to be justified for itself, not as the work of an identified brand, but as yet one more request amongst dozens, if not hundreds, each person is asked to support regularly in their lives, ranging from hospitals to arts to non-denominational relief agencies.

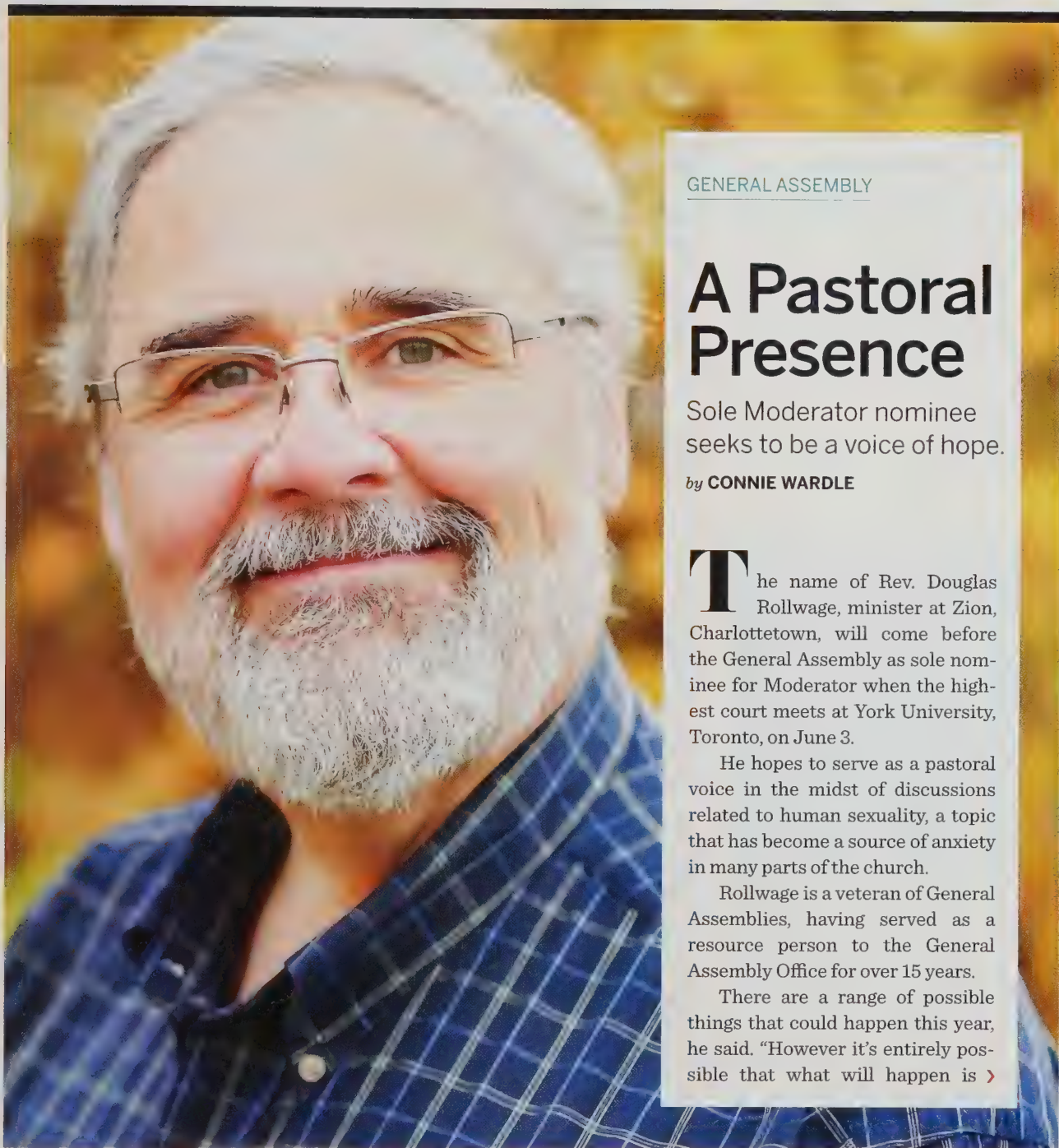
This has precedence, of course. Acts and Paul's letters sorta kinda tell a similar story of an insular group having to shed its tribalism to embrace a more comprehensive message in a bigger world.

They managed about as well then as we're managing today; that is to say, they mostly stumbled forward. 

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

BULLETIN

Community and World News



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A Pastoral Presence

Sole Moderator nominee seeks to be a voice of hope.

by **CONNIE WARDLE**

The name of Rev. Douglas Rollwage, minister at Zion, Charlottetown, will come before the General Assembly as sole nominee for Moderator when the highest court meets at York University, Toronto, on June 3.

He hopes to serve as a pastoral voice in the midst of discussions related to human sexuality, a topic that has become a source of anxiety in many parts of the church.

Rollwage is a veteran of General Assemblies, having served as a resource person to the General Assembly Office for over 15 years.

There are a range of possible things that could happen this year, he said. "However it's entirely possible that what will happen is >

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, continued

assembly will say we're not ready to do anything on this, we need another year to think, and nothing will happen. That's a possibility.

"There's another possibility that says this is all the time we've needed and we need to move quickly and make a decision now and send things under the Barrier Act" (part of the process through which the laws of the church are changed).

"Either of those scenarios carry with it the responsibility to communicate the work of the General Assembly to the national church in a very pastoral way. ... It would be very difficult to, at this point, envision a scenario whereby everybody is content with the manner in which the issue is either decided upon or is moving forward."

As the only member of the General Assembly court to continue in his role throughout the year, Rollwage says he hopes to provide that pastoral voice.

He says he also hopes for clarity on the floor of assembly in June, and he hopes "there is not a sense that we need to rush."

"Any issue which deserves any kind of prayerful reflection and study, you don't benefit from rushing."


Last year's assembly made decisions that reduced the amount of time available for individuals and church groups to consider a study guide on human sexuality and to provide feedback. The overall process may prove to be delayed this year as a result of the compressed timeline, he said.

"My hope is that time will be granted and that the denomination will be able to find a path not only of a position to take and to be comfortable with, but for that to be conveyed in a pastoral and healing manner."

In his travels as Moderator throughout the year, Rollwage says he hopes to "convey a message of

considerable enthusiasm" to churches across the country.

"My impression of the church is perhaps counter to the impression of others, which sees the church in retreat and decline. I see the church as in a position now of greater necessity and more relevance than it's had in the past."

When asked what message he would like to convey, he said: "Our hope is in Jesus Christ. Our hope is not in programs, our hope is not in responses to specific situations, our hope is not issue-driven. Our hope is in Jesus Christ. And new life in the church, and new life in our own lives and in our own hearts, is found specifically in our relationship with Jesus Christ. And that relationship comes to life in and through our life in the church, in and through our encountering Christ in the scriptures." 

Connie Wardle is the Record's senior writer and acting managing editor.

KENORA CENTRE NEEDS HELP

THE KENORA FELLOWSHIP CENTRE

is urgently seeking donations to keep its emergency shelter open after the city council delayed an amendment to a new zoning bylaw.

The Presbyterian-supported mission originally planned to close its shelter on April 1, with the Ne-Chee Friendship Centre taking on the task of running a

shelter in another location in the vicinity.

"The rezoning amendment will not allow a shelter in any of these areas including where Ne-Chee is presently located," explained Yvonne Bearbull, executive director of the Fellowship Centre. The new zoning bylaw only permits shelters in areas that are zoned residential.

The Fellowship Centre currently runs the only emergency shelter in Kenora, Ont.

At press time, city planners had scheduled an open house to discuss the situation and a proposed bylaw amendment, which if passed would allow a shelter in the downtown area, and were holding focus groups with residents and business owners.

At the focus group she attended, Bearbull suggested city staff hold a focus group with the patrons of the centre "as they are the most affected


stakeholders."

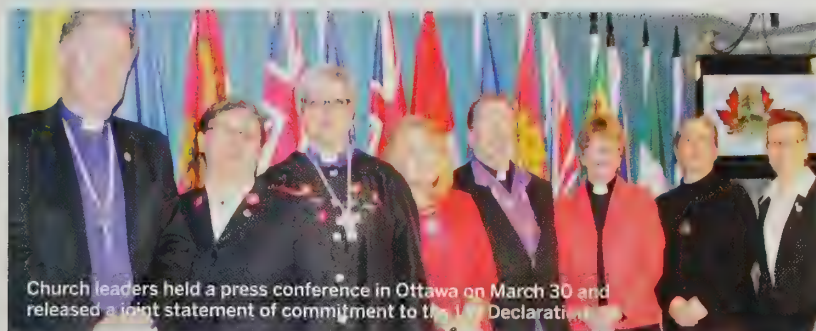
"Prior to this it had never occurred to them to consult this group," she said.

In the meantime, the board of the Fellowship Centre agreed to keep the doors of its emergency shelter open for at least a while longer.

"We will continue our present efforts and have scaled back on various supports," the board of directors said in a statement. "We are facing monthly deficits. Financial support in the amount of an additional \$6,000 per month would be a big help in the continuation of the emergency shelter program."

The emergency shelter also faced closure in 2015 due to inadequate funding, but managed to continue operating until a transition plan was in place.

To donate please visit: gofundme.com/kenorafellowship.  —CW



Church leaders held a press conference in Ottawa on March 30 and released a joint statement of commitment to the UN Declaration.

Churches Sign Joint Statement on UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

EIGHT DENOMINATIONS SIGNED a joint statement in March expressing their commitment “to implement the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.”

The document forms part of the various churches’ responses to Call to Action 48 from Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission; it calls on faith and social justice groups to “formally adopt and comply” with the UN Declaration, and included a deadline of March 31 for them to issue statements on how they will do so.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has also issued its own statement on implementing the declaration.

Rev. Karen Horst, Moderator of the 2015 General Assembly, was among the faith leaders in Ottawa.

Horst and some of the faith leaders also took part an evening panel hosted at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian where they elaborated on some of the ways their denominations would be implementing the UN Declaration.

“It’s not something we can turn around overnight,” Horst said, “but I think that the conversations we shared left all of us feeling very hopeful and that there gradually would be transition, and healing happening, and I think we’re heading down the first stages of a new day.”

The ecumenical and PCC statements are available for download at presbyterian.ca. 🍁 —CW

Presbyterian Minister Appointed National Director of the Canadian Bible Society

AS OF APRIL 4, Rev. Dr. Jonathan Dent is the new national director of the Canadian Bible Society.

“It’s a very interesting time in Canadian culture to be addressing the relevance of the Bible,” he said. “I think it’s probably being questioned more than ever before in mainstream society—something like the place of the church in the society, too.

“Regardless of varying interpretations of scriptures, we hold strongly to the belief that scriptures give us our mandate as a church, [and] our reason for being and our relevance in today’s society.”

Dent has served on the Bible Society’s board of governors for the past six years.

There are a lot of things he will miss about pastoral ministry, Dent said. He has served congregations across Canada, from British Columbia to Newfoundland, where until the end of March he served at St. David’s in St. John’s.

He now plans to relocate to Toronto where he will work out of the Bible society’s national office. 🍁 —CW

2016 College Convocations

Vancouver School of Theology

Date: Monday, May 9 at 7 p.m.

Location: Kerrisdale Presbyterian (2733 West 41st Ave., Vancouver)

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel

Honorary doctorate of divinity degrees will be presented to David Jennings and Rev. Dr. Lois M. Wilson

For information about a workshop by Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel on Tuesday, May 11 visit vst.edu/events/event/religion-without-ranting-spirituality-without-stereotypes

Presbyterian College, Montreal

Date: Thursday, May 5, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

Location: The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul (3415 Redpath St., Montreal)

Speaker: Rev. Marion Barclay MacKay

Honorary doctorate of divinity degrees will be presented to Revs. Marion Barclay MacKay and Glenn Inglis.

For information about a public lecture by Rev. Glenn Inglis, visit presbyteriancollege.ca/2016/04/annual-convocation-2016

Knox College, Toronto

Date: Wednesday, May 11 at 7:30 p.m.

Location: Convocation Hall, University of Toronto (27 King’s College Cir., Toronto)

Speaker: Rev. Linda Ashfield

An honorary doctorate of divinity degree will be presented to Margaret Jean Taylor.

For information about a free pre-convocation workshop by Rev. Linda Ashfield, visit knox.utoronto.ca/convocation

MISSION

'Mothers Shouldn't Die!'

Canadian doctor fights for maternal health in Africa. *by* AMY MACLACHLAN

FOR DR. JEAN CHAMBERLAIN, her work to help mothers in Africa is about giving women a voice.

"Mothers are buried and their stories are never told," Chamberlain told the *Record*. "With maternal mortality, in the Western world, it's easy to think, 'it's never going to happen to me, or to anyone I know.' And that's the disconnect."

"As believers, Christ tells us, yes, love. But in Proverbs, we are told to speak for those who have no voice. For me, that's been the driving force for my passion on this issue."

Chamberlain is the founder and executive director of Save the Mothers, an organization based in Uganda promoting maternal health through education, public awareness and advocacy. They do this through their two-year Master of Public Health Leadership program, which trains and educates professionals already practicing in the fields of medicine, law, media, education and in faith communities. More than 400 people have taken part in the program.

The goal is to reduce the number of maternal and infant deaths. According to Save the Mothers, about 397,000 babies die each year in Sub-Saharan Africa on the day they are born, and 16-20 mothers in Uganda die every day during childbirth—the same number that die in Canada in a year.

Chamberlain moved with her journalist husband, Thomas Froese, to Uganda in 2005. She divides her time between the East African country and Hamilton, Ont., where she teaches at McMaster University. They have three children. (Froese has a blog where he chronicles



life as a dad in Uganda. Visit dailydad.net.)

She first went to Uganda in 1998 with the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada—an opportunity, according to her, "to get my feet wet." She then spent time in Yemen, as well as Zimbabwe, Pakistan and several others, learning the issues facing mothers in developing countries.

"It is a common theme that mothers are dying not because they don't have the technology, but because they're not valued enough to make sure the basic requirements needed to save lives are in place."

So, Chamberlain and her Ugandan colleagues brainstormed the training-leaders model that addresses systemic issues around women's health—specifically their value ("Are you willing to spend 10 bucks to save your wife's life?"); fatalism ("Often times in the church, it's never promoted that women are worth saving. Don't just sit and pray, but get up and do something! They leave it up to fate or God to see what happens"); and issues around family planning ("Pastors who think a man is great because he fathered 30 children—'be fruitful and multiply'—actually, it's irresponsible").

They're also teaching the importance of planning ahead, so a family can start saving money if a C-section or life-saving drugs are needed during childbirth; helping to change the status of women within the culture so that their lives are more highly valued; starting best practices in birthing hospitals; and giving mothers a safe and positive experience of birth.

Chamberlain said there are many things Canadians can do to help. There are "vision trips." Save the Mothers also offers an annual internship program in Uganda to two interns who have completed an undergraduate degree. There are also Save the Mothers Walks held on Mother's Day weekend at various places across Canada. (Visit savethemothers.org for more information.)

Chamberlain will be the keynote speaker at next year's National Presbyterian Women's Gathering, to be held just outside of Toronto from May 19-22, 2017. (Visit womensgathering.ca for more information.)

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's managing editor.

SPECIAL REPORT

The Future of the Record

The magazine needs donor support.

by RECORD STAFF

SEVEN YEARS OF DECLINING readership averaging more than 13 per cent a year have put the 140-year-old *Presbyterian Record* in a position where the board is having to weigh its future.

Subscriptions dropped 17 per cent last year, the largest loss since 2010 when it lost 18 per cent. "It's a challenging situation for us," said the magazine's publisher and editor, David Harris, "just as it is for everyone in the church."

Harris said the board has a long-term plan for the magazine, including plans for an endowment fund to help offset circulation revenue losses. The question is whether donors will be able to respond quickly enough.

"Thankfully, our donors have been incredibly generous over the past 11 years, and this has helped us weather the storm so far," said Harris. "But we are going to be asking them to be even more generous."

Donations have held steady at around \$150,000 annually over the past four years despite the drop in readers.

"The problem with a decline in circulation is that it affects not only subscription income, but also revenue from advertising and the annual federal government grant for Canadian publications," said Harris.

The magazine is currently projecting a loss of nearly \$250,000 in 2016. It

Declining revenue is the reason cited every time a congregation cuts the Record's Every Home Plan from the budget.

posted a loss of about \$140,000 in 2015 after having posted surpluses for several years prior to the 2011 financial crisis.

Without strong financial support from donors, Harris said the *Record* may not be able to continue publishing in 2017.

"We don't want to raise a panic," Harris told staff at a meeting in March. "But it is also important for us to be transparent to our subscribers and to the Presbyterian Church in Canada."

Part of the *Record's* subscription decline is reflected in the PCC's own statistics. In 2004 the Presbyterian Church in Canada had about 124,000 professing members. In 2014, that number had dropped to 93,500—a loss of more than 18,000 members or about 14.5 per cent.

The number of baptisms reported each year has also plummeted by almost 1,000 from 2,624 in 2004 to 1,639 a decade later. Sunday school pupils—the future of the church—are down by nearly 10,000 over the same period.

As numbers continue to slide, so do monies raised. Gifts to Presbyterian Sharing, the main source of funding for denominational operating expenses, is down \$1.3 million over the same decade.

Declining revenue is the reason cited every time a congregation cuts the *Record's* Every Home Plan from the budget.

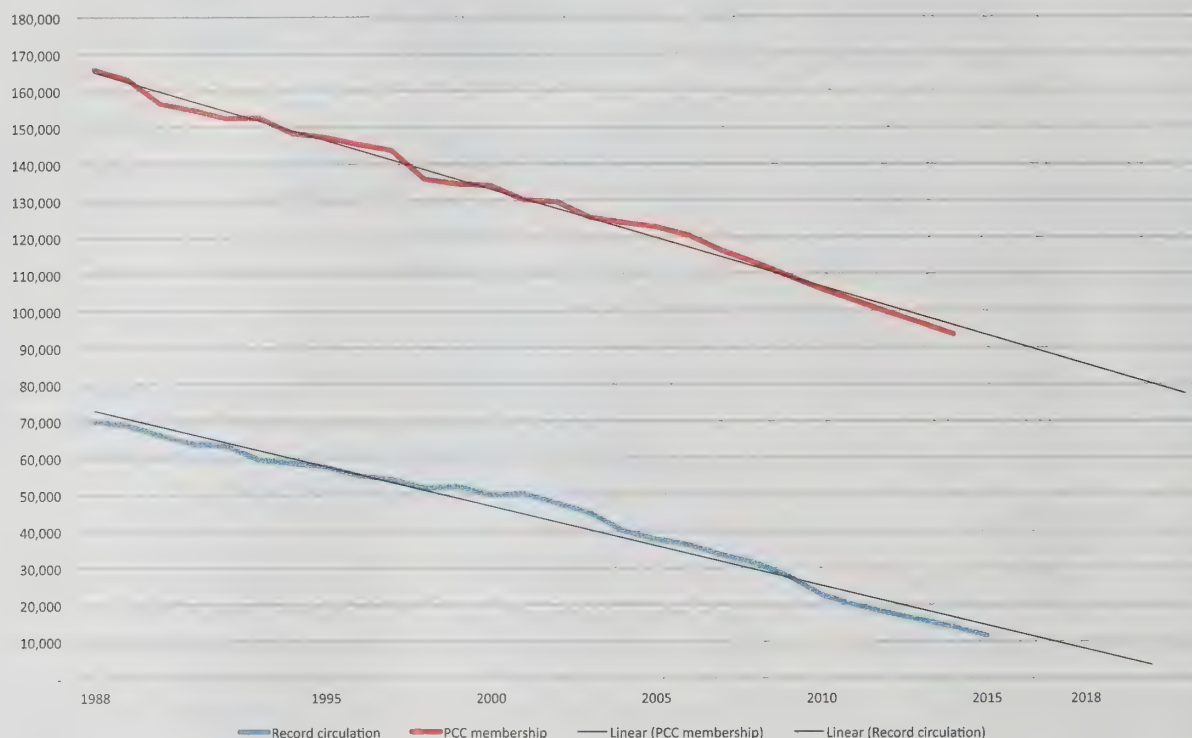
The Every Home Plan was a marketing initiative begun in the 1950s, offering readers a discounted rate if a majority of members subscribed.

By the 1970s, many congregations had stopped chasing individual subscribers for their annual subscription dues and were paying the group rate from the budget. But in the 2000s, as budgets began to shrink, congregations started dropping the Every Home Plan.

"In the 20 years from 1980 to 2000, circulation fell by 35,000 to about 50,000," said Harris. "Since then, the pace has increased, so that we've lost nearly another 40,000 subscribers."

Last year, seven congregations came off the Every Home Plan, representing a loss of more than 1,600 >

Church Membership and Magazine Circulation



readers. Another 400 subscribers died or did not renew in churches unable to offer the discounted rate, said Harris.

"It's a problem affecting almost all magazines and newspapers in both the U.S. and Canada," said Harris. "The problem is worse for us because our subscriber base—the church—is losing members, and many of those members are on fixed incomes. So, it's less money all around.

"Our hope is that we can establish a fund that will generate income to offset these losses. That would let us minimize price increases so that we can attract more readers."

Many congregations and individuals have also chosen to cancel their subscriptions over the years in response to articles they have not liked. For

example, several congregations dropped the magazine when it reported that a presbytery was discussing the issue of human sexuality in 2005. More left when the *Record* reported stories of ministers found guilty by their presbyteries of sexual assault.

The current conversation on human sexuality across the denomination has been heated at times and the *Record* has already received several cancelations from subscribers on all sides of the issue for articles that did not represent their views.

Despite the impending crisis *Record* staff continue to plan for 2017. To help secure its future, the *Record* hired Lisa Van Arem last summer to oversee fundraising and donor relations.

Congregations can still join the

Every Home Plan. New subscription software allows the *Record* to bill individual subscribers. The congregation only needs to provide a list; the *Record* can administer the process.

Harris and board chair Botond Fejes will also be addressing General Assembly about the situation.

"I realize many ministries are in need of funding," said Harris. "We can only outline our situation and what we've been doing to address it over the years." +

For subscriptions please contact Deborah Leader—dleader@presbyterian.ca. To learn more about how you can support the magazine, please contact Lisa Van Arem—lvanarem@presbyterian.ca.

Faith.

Deepening your relationship with God

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY

Same Old Story

Over and over again.

by KATIE MUNNIK

I HAVE READ IT so many times. *The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man* with Moskowitz the Awesome Dog. It is my little one's favourite book right now and so we read it frequently. In the morning, in that awkward pause after the big siblings have gone off to school. Midmorning after our snack. Maybe after lunch. And often at bedtime. Don't get me wrong—it is a fantastic book. Michael Chabon has created a brilliant reinterpretation of all our favourite comic book heroes, with a beautiful quirky kid-enchancing twist.

But so many, many times.

Each time, he asks me the same questions. Why the giant killer robots? Why is slime gross? Why chocolate milk not hot chocolate? Why?

The book ends well—with a great big hug between Awesome Man and his secret-identity mom over >



the aforementioned chocolate milk, cheddar cheese and crackers. All of which warms my own little Awesome Man's heart and my own. I'm never in autopilot by the end of the book. It ends too well for that.

Little people love repetition. They find comfort in their favourite game, or song or story, repeated time and again. And again and again. Repetition helps them to learn what to expect and that brings security, as well as helping with language acquisition and that exciting feeling of getting something right.

I know all this, and still I sigh a little when *Awesome Man* is dragged into bed with me first thing in the morning. I'm not always at the height of my shiniest grin-and-bear-it ability before breakfast. What I need to remember is that repetition is a way of reminding yourself what you know.

That is something that we never outgrow.

In the church, we celebrate the

circular year. From fasts to feasts, through ordinary days and into times of anticipation and preparations, we trace familiar patterns. The seasons play into this, of course, but our circularity moves beyond weather and warmth as we celebrate the seasons of the church.

Through story and history, we remember what we know. We hear again the ancient calling to be a covenant people. We hear of struggling nations, struggling families, and the struggles of individuals as they grapple with what it means to be called children of God. These are all old stories—some of the oldest—and each year we listen to them again. Maybe this repetition helps our own development. Our own faith language acquisition. We repeat actions and rituals in the cycles of our lives and find comfort and security.

We call this tradition, but I have a sneaking suspicion that tradition speaks more to who we are today than who we once may have been. Reaching for old


ways, we look for the solidity of established patterns, and as we repeat ourselves, our understandings deepen. On good days, so does our ability to listen for God.

One of my own often-read books—though not as frequently consulted as *Awesome Man*, I can assure you—is *From Ink Lake*, a thick collection of Canadian fiction that sat weightily on my undergraduate reading list. The professor hoped to enlarge our perspective on Canadian literature, and perhaps help us to think more broadly about what a short story might be. Because of its breadth, I find myself picking it up between other books, dipping in and seeing what slice of Canada comes to the surface. I recently reread “Spring and Summer” by Alice French, a Ninatamuit Inuit author who describes the patterns of her family life in the Mackenzie Delta. French was writing to record a way of life which she felt was slipping away, and the juxtaposition of that intent with the rhythmic nature of the life described creates a haunting effect.

She describes how every spring, the tundra turned bright with colour—the yellow marsh marigolds, the purple vetch, and the flowers of blueberry and cranberry plants.

“The white flowers ... told us where there would be an abundance of berries for later picking.”

These flowers pointed to something more, their value resting in the promise of berries still to come. A useful kind of beauty repeated each year with the turn of the seasons.

I wonder what fruit might spring from my own repeating days? 

Katie Munnik lives in Cardiff, Wales, with three kids and a professor husband. She blogs at The Messy Table on presbyterianrecord.ca.

The PCC needs PSALT!

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A We affirm our identity in Christ and cherish our continuity with the Apostolic church, even when that calling is difficult (*see Matthew 5:13*)

L We express Christ's Love, which means "seeking the best for others" (*Living Faith 8.3.2*) when we hold forth new life in Christ (*2 Cor. 5:17*), and support one another on our journey into full and joyful obedience.

T We express Christ's Truth by offering reasons for our faith, with gentleness and respect (*1 Peter 3:15*), amid a culture of confusion and pressure.



PSALT

www.psalt.info



Fourteenth century tapestry. John of Patmos watches the descent of the New Jerusalem from God.

PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

A Tale of Three Cities

An old vision gives hope of a new world. *by* LAURENCE DEWOLFE

May 1, 2016:
Sixth Sunday of Easter
Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

Picture an old saint named John. He lives on the rocky island of Patmos, a prisoner for his faith. Under the rule of Rome. He dreams of Jerusalem.

Those two cities are all the world to him. Rome, rotten to its core with the corruption of absolute power. Jerusalem, with its Temple in ruins and its faithful people scattered across the earth. In a vision he sees Rome's defeat. He sees a new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven.

He writes to his brothers and sisters, struggling to keep the faith in a hostile world. The greatest city on earth is as ➤

PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY, continued

good as finished. God's victory celebration has begun. Faithful people who have died are already at the party. John's fantastic visions offer his friends great hope, and challenge them to hold onto that hope with a life-grip.

New Jerusalem, where the powerful and the poor come together to worship the Lamb of God. Where the light of truth is a beacon of welcome to all. The gates are never closed to anyone. Sin is rejected, but sinners embraced.

A new city—a new world—where no one ever doubts God is near. And it's a city without temples! For the whole city lives in God. Its latitude is the wideness of God's mercy. Its longitude is the height of God's joy in God's people and the depth of God's compassion.

Put people who have caught that vision in a place like second-

century Rome, and there can only be trouble. These people believe all are equal, and equally loved by the one, true God. They find their security in their heavenly citizenship, not their Roman citizenship. They practice mercy and compassion. They reach out to others in ways that heal and reconcile. They celebrate God's presence everywhere.

The Christians who first find hope in John's fantastic voyage to the New Jerusalem are a struggling minority in a powerful culture that is, at best, indifferent to them and, at worst, seeks to exterminate them. Yet those Christians are convinced the world needs them, and the good news that they share. They are willing to spend their whole lives, body and soul, to live as Christ's disciples in the world.

Even now God invites us to catch the vision of what can be.

As John writes at the beginning of Revelation, a vision of things that shall *surely* be.

A church where the powerful and the poor come together to worship the Lamb of God. Where the light of truth is a beacon of welcome to all. The doors are never closed to anyone. Sin is rejected, but sinners embraced.

A church where no one ever doubts God is near. A church that worships God, not the idols of security in buildings, programs, and tradition. Its latitude is the wideness of God's mercy. Its longitude is the height of God's joy in God's people and the depth of God's compassion.

Put people who have caught that vision in the world we know today, and there can only be redemption. These people believe all are equal, and equally loved by the one, true God. They find their security in their heavenly citizenship, not their nationality. They practice mercy and compassion. They reach out to others in ways that heal and reconcile. They celebrate God's presence everywhere.

What a wonderful dream! And every bit of it is within our reach, if we really want it to be.

Long ago, God gave old John a vision, and that vision John gave to us. That vision is our invitation to join with God in the ongoing work of bringing in a new heaven and a new earth.

Let's dream dreams, cast and catch visions, join in God's mission, and share the celebration. +

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe is minister at Glenview, Toronto.

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RENEWAL

Helping Clergy Families

A proposal to organize a gathering. *by* **FRED STEWART**

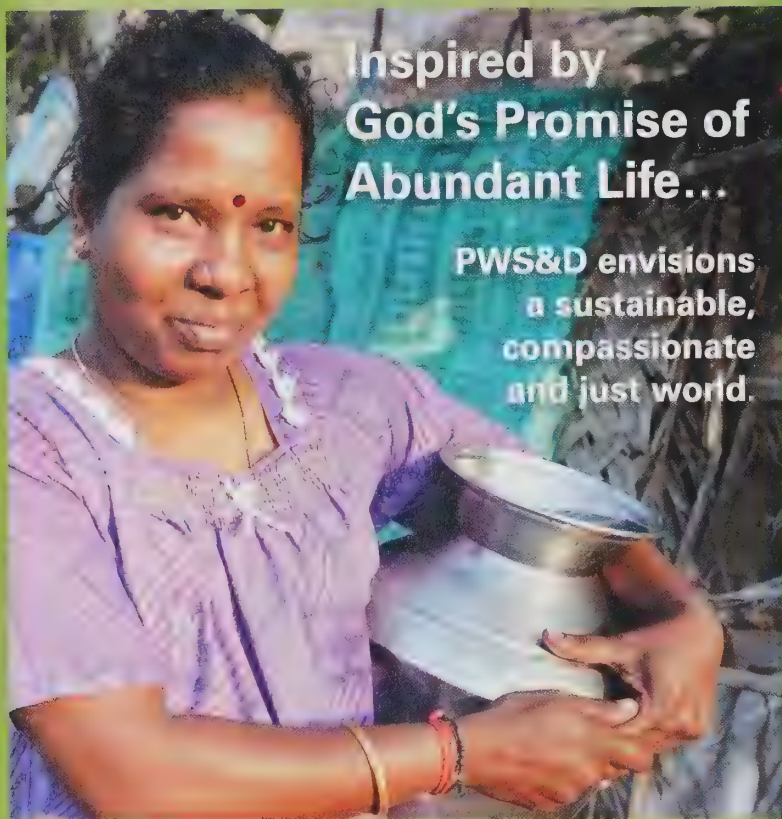
A great privilege and joy of my work with the Renewal Fellowship is that I get to have a lot of one-on-one conversations with our denomination's ministers. There are many areas of discussion. I have shared some of the heartbreaking issues that many of our clergy face. What I am going to talk about now however is another common area of concern. There is some unique additional stress for clergy families, much to do with living highly visible lives.

Recently, in a discussion with a minister who was sharing his life and challenges,

he revealed some of the specific issues of his ministry, especially as it impacted his kids. This was not a new experience for me. Many ministers with kids at home have issues with schools, moving, congregational expectations and constant scrutiny (real or imagined). This conversation took a different turn when my new friend proposed something he felt would go a long way towards helping families like his.

What he suggested was a gathering of clergy families, kids included, that brought together many of his peers going through >

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RENEWAL, continued

similar challenges. He wasn't too specific about the form of this gathering. He was focused on being able to connect with other families, with opportunities for the kids and spouses to share with others who would understand what they dealt with. What it meant to be a spouse or child of clergy.

Something in me resonated instantly. I have benefitted from friendships and regular gatherings with other ministers that had kids at home when Ruth and I were experiencing the same thing. I also have had ministers share with me how important Music Camp and Dorothy Lake Family Camp were to them and their kids.

Many of our clergy families have neither the resources nor the opportunities to make this happen. It would take a lot of work and money to make this happen. It would take the Holy Spirit igniting a movement in the hearts of many people.

So here is your challenge Canadian Presbyterians. Who is willing to serve in this type of ministry? Who would cook, clean, counsel, babysit or whatever is needed to give these families some time together without the weight of leadership or household tasks? Who is willing to financially support such a project?

I resist proposing anything more specific at this point. If there is interest from both the clergy families and the church at large, putting together a planning group will come. More importantly, I have often seen God's people come together with the resources, the venue and the volunteers for an idea that serves those who labour daily in the King's vineyard. +

Rev. Fred Stewart is executive director of the Renewal Fellowship.

*You can write to him at
fred@pastorfred.ca.*



SHARING WITNESS

Honouring Mom

A childhood lived in residential school without a maternal presence.

by VIVIAN KETCHUM

I DON'T RECALL giving my mother any Mother's Day gift or card as a child. It was not because I didn't love her. Mother's Day was not a day we celebrated in the aboriginal community back then. The thought of me trying to make my mom a special breakfast for Mother's Day is laughable and sad at the same time. For one thing, food was scarce and not to be wasted. If one wanted to show our mom any appreciation it would be to help with the never-ending laundry that a large family piles up.

I'm thinking of Mother's Day and residential school. Were there any positive mother figures when I was there? There was one young house mother—she was caring in nature and tried to comfort us when we got homesick. She got engaged and left the school.

I don't remember her name, just that she left a vague memory of maternal feelings. A person that I remember fondly, because she reminded me of my mom with her caring attitude.

Another maternal memory is of me spending Christmas with an elderly lady in Winnipeg. My parents didn't pick up us for Christmas at the residential school. So those remaining were shipped off to various homes for the holidays.

The elderly lady I stayed with lived alone. She took me to a big store and even allowed me to visit my older sister where she was staying. That memory is warm and fuzzy. I see bright colourful wrappings and remember laughing with my older sister.

I don't recall the older lady's name, I was so young at the time, but for me it was like an oasis. No homesickness or scary stuff to bother me. ➤

There was good food and lots of treats from this lady. I drank in the attention. When I got back to the residential school, I had lots of presents to take with me. Even afterwards the kind lady sent me treats through the mail.

There was another maternal figure I recall when I was in the dorm; she was not a staff member, but an older girl who helped me with the basics of doing chores. I will call her Betty, which is not her real name. Betty helped me learn how use the sink to wash up and brush my teeth. The sink was circular and sat in the middle of the large room. There was a foot pump at the bottom of it to turn the water on. My leg couldn't reach the pump, so Betty would step on it and showed me how to brush my teeth. She also taught me how to make my bed to avoid the house mother's harsh words.

Residential school was a nightmare for me. To this day, I am still living with the consequences, but I am trying to find the good. I have to search hard through my memories, pull one out that invokes warmth. I find a few, but not enough to take away the horror of my stay there.

I want to end this column by honouring my mother this Mother's Day. She would find it humorous—in the indigenous community we honour all mothers every day. It must have broken her heart to have her children taken away to be put in residential school and in later years in foster homes or group homes. When I was with my mom, I felt her love and she showed it in different ways. Clean sheets. Berry picking. Brushing my hair. Little gestures that I do remember my mom doing for me and for our family.

My mom doing what a mother is supposed to do. Love her family and raise her family if only she was allowed to.

Love you, mommy. Always. +

Vivian Ketchum is Anishinabe of Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation, outside of Kenora, Ont. She lives in Winnipeg.

They say the Scots built Canada.

We say we're still at it.

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FAMILY

Secrets and Lies

Thanking God for sticky grace. *by* KELLY SCOTT

SHE FELT like God had to make special ‘interventions’ in her life to make right all the wrong she had done and had experienced at the hands of others. “It’s like God has been looking out for me,” she wrote. “I don’t know why God does this. I’m feeling so worthless and so down because once again, I’ve been lied to, and humiliated, and it is always me who must pay the consequences of others’ actions.” >

FAMILY, continued

"In fact, sometimes when God does intervene," she wrote, "I get mad at God because I want to stay in the defeated state and not move on. I want an excuse to wallow in all this muck and hide from my life and from God, but God won't let me. It's at those times I feel God's gentle but persuasive pull and slowly I stand back up with God's help."

"My grace is enough; it's all you need. My strength comes into its own in your weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9, The Message)

She told me: "This morning while I checked my emails, still wearing my PJs at 10 a.m., with un-brushed teeth and tears still leaking from my eyes, God ministered to my soul through the beautiful sunlight that shone on my face. For a moment, I forgot that I was in the frigid north, surrounded by secrets and lies and I imagined that I was on an island beach and this sunny sunshine was warm and everything was sandy and then I forgot what had happened to me and I felt like God had made that little light shine just for me!

"I rejoiced and thanked God for such a small glimpse of the sunny grace.

"Then feeling a little better, I suggested making waffles for my daughter and oh, how I tensed up when I realized that the words were out of my mouth before I had checked to see if we had the ingredients. I let out a sigh of relief when we did have everything we needed and how good those waffles tasted as we stood at the counter

**"I want an excuse
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It's at those times
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I stand back up
with God's help."**

scarfing up warm waffles with melted butter and maple syrup in our jammies.


"And again I rejoiced and thanked God for such a taste of sticky grace.

"And while I was typing this letter to you my friend, the front door made music as the keypad was punched and in walked my

other daughter from university all excited and with wet hair, talking a blue streak about a date in the dark, of eating at a restaurant in the dark, being seated by a blind waiter and her excitement was palpable, she was effulgent then blushing when I saw the ring on her finger, not from the boy but given by a roommate and it made me forget what happened this week that had left me stuck in the mud of fear and distrust.

"And I rejoiced and thanked God for such a glimpse of youthfulness and how grace is given to young and old, weary and energized, those stuck and those free.

"And all of a sudden I felt free—was free—free from the power of sin and humiliation and free to experience all of God's grace given so undeservedly to me."

"But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which God loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with God and seated us with God in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come God might show the immeasurable riches of God's grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2:4-7) 

Kelly Scott writes and cooks in Bradford, Ont. She served as an Ontario multi-faith chaplain in long-term care and continues to minister to those who are ill and grieving. She blogs at cookinguptroublewithkelly.com and on the Record's website.

REFLECTION

My Life as an Elder

Without any training and little guidance.

by PAT WHITE

WHEN I WAS FIRST ASKED to be a ruling elder in my church my instinct was to say 'No.' I reflected on it for a long time. When I finally did accept the challenge, I was ordained, as it turns out, on my birthday surrounded by family and friends.

No classes were offered, no guidance given. The five new elders ordained that day were told to read the *Book of Forms*,

which we all did, only to find out later we were the only ones on that session who even knew that the document existed.

Our first session meeting was the following day. Confidentiality was the big word that was said over and over again. After the opening prayer and the constitution of the court, it seemed we were in a board of managers meeting. Everything that came before us had a >

REFLECTION, continued

financial implication and that seemed to be the criteria for making decisions.

One of the new elders asked: "Weren't we supposed to be the spiritual leaders of the congregation?"

Silence followed and finally the minister said we would get to that aspect of our duties at other meetings.

Within days, I was asked to be the representative to our presbytery. I got the job not because of any knowledge of church government I might have had, but because no one else wanted anything to do with the courts of the church beyond the session. Presbytery was an eye-opener. Both teaching and ruling elders were equals, and they appeared to care for what was happening in their territory. Discussions and votes were not always civil, or even righteous, but the care that people had for whatever the issue was, was evident.

It didn't take long to learn that Presbyterians don't make decisions in a hurry. Who the moderator was determined how much prayer went into decisions both at session and presbytery. Often when disagreement was evident in the court, delays were enacted, with the hope that someone would get discouraged and change their position. In this inefficient way, God was still able to work with us and God's kingdom grew, sometimes despite us.

The congregation declined to the point that we almost went to a half-time ministry. By the grace of God, circumstances in our community changed and the congregation decided that they had a place and purpose. Everyone became more active in prayer ministry, outreach, and getting out of our comfort zone. It took a number of years of ups and downs but that congregation has turned around and now is one to look up to for growth ideas.

That first year, I also was made a commissioner to the General Assembly,

I don't always get my way when ideas are presented and voted on, but God does work in the church court. Hindsight is 20/20 and some of my desires were not what was best for the church.

and went off having read the reports from cover to cover. We did not have first-time commissioner orientation that year so it was 'try and stay awake and vote as best you could.' The presbytery had not given any instruction either as to what to expect. Both of those would have been helpful and my votes may have made more sense. I have had the great privilege of serving as a commissioner four more times since then. Great changes have occurred over the last 20-plus years; with experience my votes are more intelligent.

Having a district to oversee as an elder is an interesting experience. As one of the new elders, my district was the leftovers from those persons who were on the roll. I had families and singles, people who had very little contact with the congregation, and those who had come recently. Some people were happy to see me, but most did not want any visitors from the church. The norm had been to visit when finances were needed and it took a while for people to realize we were not asking for money.

After 10 years my circumstances changed and I moved to another community and congregation. Within a couple of years, I was once again asked to consider being an elder in that place.

The election was again by ballot and I was elected.

This session was very different from the first one. Here only the minister gave any prayer or devotional whereas in the first congregation it was the elders who did the praying and the minister only constituted the court. Districts were assigned with the needs of the elder and parish considered. Many of the older elders changed the people in their districts around to accommodate the new people.

Being now in an older congregation that is not growing, and having ministers that leave after a short time, the session has been used to having different moderators with different styles. Finances are important to this group as well, but not to the extent that they are not trying to discern their future in God's kingdom. We have some children and youth, and are making an effort to discern how to help young families be welcome in our place of worship.

Being involved in presbytery has continued, and educational experiences have been undertaken over the years. Prayer and Bible study have been the area in which I have spent most of my time. The role of ruling elder has been the most fulfilling job I could have ever imagined. Yes it is frustrating and there are days when I wonder why I continue. I don't always get my way when ideas are presented and voted on, but God does work in the church court. Hindsight is 20/20 and some of my desires were not what was best for the church.

If any of you reading this are ever asked to be a ruling elder, consider this: You will be challenged in your beliefs, strengthened in your faith, and be more fulfilled than you ever believed possible. ☛

Pat White lives in Brantford, Ont.



YOUTH

Yearning for Connectedness

A survey of second generation Asian-Canadians.

by NAM SOON SONG

TWO DECADES AGO, in 1996, a so-called “Silent Exodus” was declared in the United States, drawing attention to the incessant—albeit hushed—departure of young Asian Christians from their respective Asian ethnic churches. This phenomenon was paralleled by the growing number of young Christians leaving the church as a whole in the United States. In 1999, George Barna estimated that two out of three teenagers are likely to quit attending church after they leave home. Likewise, over the years, many leaders of Asian Canadian church congregations in Canada have expressed their concern about the number of young adults who, although deeply committed to the church throughout their secondary school years, have tended to leave the church upon graduation from high school.

The Centre for Asian-Canadian Theology and Ministry conducted research specifically targeting 1.5- and 2nd-generation Asian-Canadian Protestant young adults. By recruiting research participants with varying degrees of church involvement, the research aimed to address the question, “Can a Silent Exodus be verified?” And in doing so, this research attempted to demystify relevant religious attitudes, beliefs and commitment in relation to participants’ current involvement in the church.

The research recruited 300 post-secondary students of Asian background in Ontario, and asked each student to complete a paper-based survey questionnaire. The demographics of survey participants were as follows: 153 students of Korean descent, 116 students of Chinese descent, and 31 students of Taiwanese descent, all ranging from 17 to 29 years of age. ➤

YOUTH, continued

One hundred and thirty-three students were male and 167 students were female; 107 students were born in Canada and 193 students were born outside of Canada. All survey participants self-identified as Protestant.

The 74 survey questions were both multiple choice and descriptive, covering a wide array of topics including demographic information, students' church experiences while they were in high school, their current church and spiritual life, their parents' church life, as well as their ideas and expectations about the church and youth ministry.

Some of the highlights are as follows: 82 per cent of participants attended their own ethnic church; 57 per cent attended an English service exclusively; and nine per cent attended services in both English and their own ethnic language.

Two of the top reasons for choosing to attend a particular language service were better understanding and comfortableness.

Many indicated involvement in various leadership positions in the church during high school years, such as worship leader (44), praise team (107), and Sunday school teacher (87).

Also, during high school 60 per cent attended a church service once a week; and 14 per cent more than once a week. Thirty-one per cent attended a Bible study once a week; five per cent more than once a week; and 39 per cent less than once a month. Two hundred and forty-one participants indicated their secondary school church experience was positive, while 55 indicated that it was not.

Out of 300 survey participants, 216 participants indicated current church attendance and 84 participants indicated that they do not attend church.

Out of 216 current church attendees, 130 attendees went to church service once a week; and 34 attendees went

more than once a week.

Among those who do not attend the church currently, 17 indicated they plan to return to the church in the future; 26 indicated they will not return; and 41 indicated they do not know.

In other words, about 10 per cent of participants left the church completely. Only two out of 84 non-attendees indicated current involvement in Christian organizations on or outside of campus.

The reasons for discontinuing church attendance were as follows: Independence from parents (27); Moving/distance (31); Busy schedule (52); Absence of meaning (60); Hurtful experience (6); and Other (13).

When asked to elaborate under "other" they wrote: Too tired, general loss of faith, lost interest, need a break, confusing, etc. That means out of 84 who left the church, 60 could not find meaning in the church. Or, 20 per cent of once active teens were lost to the church in young adulthood.

A few further interesting observations from the survey:


BIBLE STUDY MATTERS. Less than 10 per cent of those young people who went to Bible study at least once a week later left the church in their 20s. About three-quarters of those who went to Bible study less than once a month dropped out.

LEADERSHIP MATTERS. The more active a teen is in praise and worship the more likely they are to stay in the church in their 20s. Less than 20 per cent of those active in church leadership dropped out in their 20s. More than 50 per cent of those less or not at all involved left the church.

PARENTS MATTER. Those whose parents were affiliated with the church tended to remain in the church. Those whose

parents were involved in choir or praise team were more likely to remain in the church. Those whose mothers were involved in kitchen work tended to leave the church. As well, those whose fathers served as elders and ushers were more likely to leave the church than those whose fathers served other roles in the church.

Among those who discontinued church attendance, 37 indicated that they still engage in one or more forms of spiritual practice, such as prayer, meditation, listening to Internet or TV sermons, and reading the Bible. Should they return to the church they attended in secondary school, they would like to see changes taking place in the church, including "openness to diversity," "teaching and preaching connected to the real world and to science," "teaching and preaching connected to youth," "youth program change," "trust, love, and friendly community," "more spirituality," and "changes in understanding of youth."

There is a yearning "to be connected" to a diverse world, to a real world, to spirituality, to the congregation, and to their inner selves, or "who they are." It has been repeatedly indicated that they wanted to be part of a church that made them feel connected to real life events, to family, to church leaders, to congregations, and to spirituality in a changing world. These findings suggest the importance of and potential positive effects to be gained from youth ministry in the church. They also show that the survey participants' views concerning the future of the church are generally hopeful and worthy of further analysis. Indeed, there is hope that those students who do not currently attend church might one day return. 

Dr. Nam Soon Song is director of the Asian-Canadian Centre for Theology and Ministry.



VIEWPOINT

The View from the Ages

The Earth revolves around the Sun. *by* ALLEN AICKEN

Here's a Christian assumption that shapes life: the world, and everything in it, is created. The ecosystem comes into being from outside itself.

Not only the stuff—the people, the beavers, the highways, and the oxygen—was created, but also the way they interrelate. Creation is a working, inter-dependent whole, with its seasons, its rain and sunshine, and its life that begets life.

These living things of the earth and the sea “all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.” (Psalm 104:27-28) The 104th Psalm sees this vision, then tells it in poetry!

Energy—the ability to work and to give shape—came through the cycle of the weather, the earth, the community, and from human and

beast labour. In the world of biblical writers, the sun is seen as such a vital source of energy that it is sometimes overpowering.

By the clever process of harvesting fossil fuels we take the energy of the sun which has been gathered over the course of a very long time and use it to spare us the need to work so hard. The zoom can be placed in a gas tank and used to move people and goods about the planet.

But it is too clever. We are using it up much more quickly than it is being made. The humongous problem is that if we use it up, we will also use up all of life.

So, some argue, let's make it God's problem. As popular as that may be among the pious, it is a distortion. Smallpox epidemics and the bubonic plague did not yield to such an antidote. Nor did the Holocaust or the power of the Roman >

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VIEWPOINT, continued


Empire against which Jesus taught. Well, they may have yielded to the grace of God. But they did not yield by simply being returned to God's desk from ours. Eventually they were seen to be curses that could only be abated through a change in people's behaviour.

We'll need to face harsh news but we've been this way before. Seven decades ago we were rallied from the grief of war by this: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. We have before us an ordeal ..." It's a worldwide issue that's as difficult as the personal issue of quitting smoking. The first response is to say, "I can't do it!"

Yes, you can! Failing to move on from dirty energy ends in death. Abundance of life lies on the other side. The rest of us cannot love you into the decision of your life. You must take ownership. You'll need the rest of us, you'll need the blessing of God, but you'll also need to own the killer in you.

The economic empires of this world tell us that we cannot live without fossil fuels. Fissures are appearing in that argument, however. Countries such as Denmark and Germany are struggling to show the viability of sustainable energy. Corporations, educational institutions, and churches are opting to shape their investments so that there are no fossil fuels in their portfolio. By itself that will not bring the end of the lifestyle. A tipping point is coming. The world is now perceiving it and it will need the arm and mind of Christ to help it through.

A new world—more local, more sustainable, with more employment than the oil patch delivers—is being born. Our children's children may see it full-grown. The pain of birth will give way to new life.

The church's 21st century calling is to act as midwife while a new world is being born. 

Allen Aicken is a retired minister living in Vancouver.

Focus

Stories of mission, ministry and community



MISSION

God Makes a Way

It took 11 years to arrive from the DR Congo.

by MARY LOU JOHNSTON

LATE in November 2015, two weeks before the rush of Syrian refugees to Canada, a refugee family quietly arrived in Toronto from Namibia and was whisked off to the Niagara area. Thus a long story ended and a new one began.

In 2002, Odimba Lotshaka was working as a nursing director at Uvira State Hospital in Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The eastern DRC had been in a brutal civil war. Odimba's Christian faith led him to treat all patients alike. But the rebels did not like him treating the government soldiers so they threatened his life. He escaped via Lake Tanganyika, fled to >

MISSION, continued



The Lotshaka family in their new Canadian home. Parents: Rachael and Steve. Boys: Ben, 16, and Daniel, 14. Girls: Henritto, 11, Bernice, 9, Shekinah, 7, and Nancy, 2.

Zambia and finally to a UN refugee camp in Namibia. A year later his wife and two sons were able to follow and joined him there.

In 2010, the evangelism and mission committee of the Niagara presbytery was considering sponsoring a refugee family. Rev. Martin Wehrmann suggested we sponsor the Lotshakas to come to Canada.

This was accepted, a committee was formed, money was raised (about \$35,000 in a year from 10 churches), and we were ready. We were warned it might take a few years.

Odimba's English name is Steve and he had access to a computer with which he used to write to us in Canada.

Steve's first language is Swahili, the second is French, which he learned in the Belgian Congo schools, and his third is English, which he learned while living in the refugee camp.

By now three daughters had joined his family. Steve's letters were filled with his deep and abiding Christian faith, which never failed in supporting his belief that God was hearing his and our prayers for their departure. Sentences like this were in every

Rachel, their mother, when asked what she found surprising about Canada said after a long pause, "everything!"

letter he wrote: "Life's challenges are still here but God is always making a way." Or, "We have to be patient and always trust unto the Lord on everything—he is the Master of Time and Circumstances."

Over the years of waiting, Steve told us about living conditions in the camp: "It is like a prison with little freedom to vary the routine, our house is made of soil and sticks, the sanitary facilities are poor with flies and the water is of poor quality. We are allotted some cooking oil, beans, maize meal, salt and cooking charcoal but the quantities are small for a large family. Rachel, my wife, has to cook outside but in the rainy season the smoke hurts her

eyes. We are thankful that my brother in Christ lets me use his computer to write these letters and that the children are able to go to school in English taught by skilled refugee teachers."

Finally after three years we heard that the office in Pretoria was sending agents to interview the family. After that there was another year or two while all the information was being checked. Rob Shropshire, the Presbyterian Church in Canada's refugee coordinator, wrote a very reassuring letter of our continuing support. After many other checks were completed we could not understand why there were more delays. Everything was prepared for their arrival. I almost believe that our committee was more impatient than Steve.

Finally, on November 19, 2015 the family arrived—11 years after Steve's escape from the DR Congo. They are living in a house in St. Catharines. When asked what they like about schools and life in Canada, Eben, the oldest son said, "math;" and Daniel said, "games!" For the girls, "I like to play in the snow;" and, "I built a snow man." Nancy, the two-year-old never stops moving and talking to everyone. Rachel, their mother, when asked what she found surprising about Canada said after a long pause, "everything!"

The biggest improvement to be sure is the cooking stove. Steve is working hard to find a place where his nursing skills can be upgraded and in the meantime he is hoping to work as a volunteer at a nursing home. He continues to mention how important our support has been, both over the years and now when they are finally in their new home. ☀

Mary Lou Johnston is a member at Knox, Dunnville, Ont.

CLIMATE CHANGE

“Now we call it the Dry Season”

Haiti's farmers are having to adapt to increasingly arid conditions. *by* STEPHANIE MCDONALD

NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD Yvette Nicholas hasn't been farming long, but she knows that things are different today in Haiti than when her parents were young. "The older people taught me that rain started in April. Now people are planting their gardens in June and July because there's no rain," Yvette told me last September on a trip to Haiti. I was there to hear from farmers about how they were being affected by climate change.

Exactly a year before that I too was farming, on my family farm in Southwestern Ontario. I knew the agony of watching the sky for rain clouds during a particularly dry time, or praying for sun when the rain wouldn't let up and hay was lying out in the field. But of course, my >

A young girl carries water from a well to her house in the village of Pernier, about a 30 minute drive from Port-au-Prince, Haiti. According to the United Nations World Food Program, 3.6 million Haitians face food insecurity after three consecutive years of drought.

CLIMATE CHANGE, continued

situation and Yvette's are impossible to compare.

When I met Yvette it was well into the year's second rainy season. Or what is traditionally known as the rainy season, when showers are expected on a near daily basis. With rainfall patterns becoming erratic, farmers in different regions of the country told me of an agricultural calendar in disorder. In 2015 the situation was exacerbated by El Niño. The country was in the midst of the worst drought those I met could remember.

Yvette lives in the community of Kabay, close to Desarmes in central Haiti. Of the 250 families there, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (of which Presbyterian World Service & Development is a member) is working with 150 of them on agriculture and reforestation initiatives. The area is designated one of the most food insecure.

Yvette has been involved with the project for a year. She was provided with seeds and barbed wire to build a fence around her garden to keep animals out. She says without that support she wouldn't have had the means to plant such a variety of vegetables. And she's already seeing benefits.

"These peanuts that I planted, there wasn't much rain and I didn't get as much as I wanted, but I bought two chickens with what I made from them," she said. And her dreams for the future? "If it rains, I'm going to work the rest of the land. My dream is to advance, have things to eat and seeds to save. I would buy four chickens instead of two."

Yvette wasn't at the climate conference, known as COP21, held in Paris at the end of last year. Nor were the millions of small-scale farmers from around the world whose livelihoods were up for debate.

Much of southern Canada has been insulated from the effects of climate change so far. But we know that in other parts of the world more extreme and unpredictable weather is having an impact on farmers' ability to grow food for themselves and their communities. At least 70 per cent of people who suffer hunger globally live in rural areas in developing countries, and most are small-scale farmers.

"People talk about it all the time," he said. "People say, 'when I was growing up, it wasn't like this.' They're asking 'what's it going to be like for us in the future?'"

WHILE ATTENDING THE CLIMATE CONFERENCE last December I heard many world leaders make statements. The one that struck me was by the Honourable Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, who quoted Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott from the nearby island of St. Lucia: "... a morning could come in which governments might ask what happened not merely to the forests and the bays, but to a whole people."

Farmers in the developing world like Yvette are doing what they can to adapt to this new normal. But in a country like Haiti, where it's estimated that 59 per cent of the population live below the poverty line, they can't do it alone. Canada's support for agriculture in the developing world has declined over the past few years. The Foodgrains Bank is encouraging the Canadian government to re-invest in this vital sector.

Back in Haiti, I meet Elanée Joseph who farms in a community up the mountain from Desarmes. He's made the one-hour trek down to meet with me.

I ask him about any long-range changes he's observed in the weather and if it's something his neighbours are discussing.

"People talk about it all the time," he said. "People say, 'when I was growing up, it wasn't like this.' They're asking 'what's it going to be like for us in the future?' It used to be the rainy season, now we call it the dry season." Elanée lost his beans and corn in the last planting season due to the scarcity of rain. He said that some of his neighbours no longer even bother to plant. "When I was a little kid it would rain a lot more. We would eat better."

Like nearly everywhere in Haiti, Elanée's community of Wondo has a deforestation problem. It's estimated that less than four per cent of Haiti's land area is forested. The mountaintops in the country have been particularly hard-hit. "A long time ago, people started to have less and cut trees down out of need to make charcoal, to eat and send their children to school," Elanée said.

Reforestation is seen as an important adaptation technique to combat the drought and the increasingly



A worker, suffering from heat exhaustion, leaves her shift early at the salt evaporation ponds in Anse-Rouge, northwestern Haiti. Drought is hitting this region, one of the hungriest, most desolate parts of the most impoverished nation in the hemisphere and it has alarmed international aid organizations.

dry conditions. In Elanée's community alone over 357,000 trees have been planted over the past six years.

"Trees call the rain," Elanée told me several times. In riverbeds that were dry, a little bit of water is now coming back. "Animals graze and people rest there. There's cool air."

At the Paris climate conference I heard an emotional plea from Julianne Hickey, the director of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand. She spoke of how her home, and the other islands in the Pacific region, had once been a place of abundant food and water, but how this was being threatened by sea level rise, more frequent droughts and an increase in pests.

Through her tears, she quoted Pope Francis: "May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope." They are wise words for us to remember as we Christians and the Presbyterian Church play our part in addressing climate change and ensuring farmers like Yvette and Elanée have equal opportunity to feed themselves and dream of a bright future. +

Stephanie McDonald is a senior policy advisor at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. She visited Haiti and Nicaragua in September to witness the impacts of climate change there.



Dwell, Work, Be with God

A primer on the Missional Church.

by **ANDREW FAIZ** illustrations **GEMMA CORRELL**



GEMMA CORRELL/AGOODSON

Rev

■ JOEL SHERBINO WAS

ONCE SITTING IN A CONFERENCE. This is how he tells it: “The whole conference was based around this one question: ‘If your church were to disappear tomorrow, would anyone in the community notice or even care?’ And I think for me, that is where the rubber met the road.”

That’s a harsh question, and it led Sherbino to rethink his approach to ministry. “I’ve been minister at Paris, Ont., for almost nine years. Previous to that I was working with International Ministries overseas in Blantyre, Malawi. For me that was really kind of where I began to get a better working practical theology. We saw people’s needs every day. The stories that Jesus taught in the gospels really hit home hard. When someone comes to your door and is literally asking for a glass of water. This is not a theological discourse, this is ‘I am thirsty,’ ‘I need a job,’ ‘I need some food.’

“And so here in Paris, we’ve started moving back into the community. We feel that church should be less about making your life busy and more about providing avenues to build your faith in whatever spheres God has placed you. And so one of the things that we’ve done is to actually pull back from developing programs and specific ministries because we want to free people up to be involved in their daily lives with their families, with their neighbours, with their communities.

“There’s an expectation that I’m not in my office, that I’m actually living this out in the community as well. I hesitate to use the word ‘organic’ because that’s

just thrown onto popular phrases, but it’s just trying to be much more dynamic in terms of living out our faith in Paris, Ont., and figuring out what that looks like for us.”

Sherbino also doesn’t toss out the phrase “Missional Church” casually, perhaps because of the same caution since it has become a buzzword. But that is why I interviewed him, alongside Rev. Glen Soderholm, to talk about what it means to be a Missional Church.

If you break down what he said above, you’ll get a working definition of Missional Church: First, ‘Church should be less about making your life busy.’ That is, it is not a thing you do on the side, another thing to make you busy. Second, ‘Church is more about providing avenues to build your faith in whatever spheres God has placed you.’ Yes, that’s the key to understanding church; you’re doing church at work, at school, at the gym, at the corner store, wherever God has placed you. And so, as Sherbino says, “We want to free people up to be involved in their daily lives ...”

Think also of what he said about Malawi—if a person is thirsty, that is not a metaphor, you give them a glass of water. That practical need for practical theology may be obvious to identify in Malawi; it is perhaps subtler here in Canada. Or perhaps we haven’t sought it out. Missional Church theology asks we seek it out.



I SUSPECT MANY OF YOU READING THIS may feel uncomfortable with that idea—to take church out onto the sidewalk, into the mall. The model of church we’re all comfortable with, and comfortable in, with our own comfortable pews and comfortable habits—is known as “Attractional.” As in, “Hey, look at us, we have good stuff for you inside our fortress.” It was a working model for many centuries dependent solely on the centrality of Christianity as one of the pillars of society.

Then stuff happened and many of those pillars, including government, family and community, lost their centrality. The stated authority given these institutions, including the church, has diffused. The reasons for this are myriad and complicated as historians, sociologists and others study the details. And while the rubble continues to be examined we know this with certainty: That very authority must now be earned by those very institutions. Whatever the values were that defined our society have now disintegrated into competing ideologies.

Missional Church theory argues that the Attractional Model, the very thing of Christendom itself for which many are still deeply nostalgic, sought to bring glory to the Church and not to God. Darrell Guder, in his book *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*, argues that the word 'mission' as used by North American churches in the last century "basically meant the Western expansion of its own culturally conformed Christianity." He writes of the word 'evangelism': "All assumed that the Western missionary brought the correct understanding of the gospel to the non-believing culture ..."

Guder is the senior fellow at the Centre for Missional Leadership at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver. He is also professor emeritus at Princeton Theological College and is considered the one who kickstarted the Missional Church movement. His theologically rich arguments upend common clichés about church. He challenges us to think of church outside our comfort zones. (He edited *Missional Church*, generally regarded as the book that started the movement. It includes a very good history of the creation of Modernity.)

In *Continuing Conversion*, Guder quotes Karl Barth: "God is a missionary God. Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world: the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. ... There is church because there is mission, not vice versa. ... Such an understanding of mission moves the subject far beyond the level of program or method. It disallows any definition of mission that makes it a sub-topic of church."

And that is why Joel Sherbino is careful to separate it

from programming. "Church programs," the thing we've been doing and funding for decades, is passive. It is what we do inside our walls, asking others to come to us.

The Missional Church demands something much more active. That we break down our walls and go into the world—keeping in mind Guder's provisos that it is God's mission not the church's we are doing.

This for me, at least, is where things get confusing: In my half century I have been trained to think of church as God. That the Church is the mission of God; the Bride of Christ with all the complicated metaphorical attachments.

His theologically rich arguments upend common clichés about church. He challenges us to think of church outside our comfort zones.

A SINGLE LINE in all my reading and research and interviews helped me to understand. It appears in *Missional Church*: "In Jesus the reign of God has become present." And the next line: "In his actions and resurrection he demonstrates that God is acting incarnationally to redeem and renew creation." God is in the flesh, through Jesus renewing humanity.

Now I am in that photograph—or as Sherbino said, trying to figure out what it looks like for me. And you are in that picture as well working in your sphere. We are not mediated through the church; Jesus is with us.

I'll be honest—this still scares me. I've got a lot of cultural learning to unlearn.

Rev. Glen Soderholm and Sherbino meet regularly over lunch to talk basketball and church. Where Sherbino is guiding an established congregation towards a missional model, Soderholm is starting a new church, Two Rivers, Guelph, Ont., within the new model.

A quarter-century minister in the Presbyterian >

COVER STORY, continued

Church in Canada, Soderholm is known to many as a singer-songwriter. Two Rivers is a calling he had several years ago. There is no church building. No administrative office. He started it by hanging out in public spaces, coffee shops, let's say, and talking to people. He met people where they were. He invited them into his home, into each other's homes. He met them playing sports. Not all of them are Christians, not all of them are even spiritual. But they meet, and talk.

"Where have you felt most fully human this week in pain or brokenness? And can we share those things together and help people to start to have their eyes open to those moments, those experiences of God?"

He tells a story that illustrates some profound ideas:

"We had a woman participating in our community who was not a follower of Christ and she was sort of catching onto this. She had gone down to the river with her two dogs and was describing how the dogs had been splashing around in the water on this beautiful sunny day. And she was talking about how she had seen the light refracted through the droplets of water and just the beauty of that moved her and then she stopped.

"And we all kind of went, yeah, exactly, that's it. Where have you felt most fully human this week in pain or brokenness? And can we share those things together and help people to start to have their eyes open to those moments, those experiences of God?"

"That to me is a picture of the reign of God at work in our lives. And the more people become aware of those things; I think we're doing our job. I think that people will hopefully begin to understand that they are participating in something that is bigger than themselves and beyond them. And of course we know who that is, we know what

that is, we call it the Triune God of Grace, the love of God shown to us in Christ."

In unpacking this story, we first, and most importantly, see that God spoke to a person. And the person didn't necessarily know that God had spoken to her. But, luckily, she was part of a community that could help her discern what she had experienced.

God speaks all the time. We don't always hear or see or understand.

To do that, to discern what God is doing, we need to make an effort that requires us walking outside of the comfort of our church buildings and into public spaces.

Read Soderholm's story one more time. Think about it. Have a beverage, do a chore, go for a walk. Meditate on those questions in the middle—where have you felt most human recently, and do you recognize that as a God moment? And, where can you share that?

Or think of it this way: What if your church had no walls? What if you did church in a coffee shop? How comfortable would you feel?

But it's not about comfort, is it? Church was never meant to be about comfort. It became about comfort.



I HEARD A TALK on the Missional Church in Vancouver several years ago. It sounded good and interesting but went over my head, perhaps because I was uncomfortable with what I heard. When that same speaker gave the same talk again last year at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver, in the days before General Assembly, I arrived early to hear it again.

ALAN ROXBURGH contributed to *Missional Church*, the book Guder edited. He has been at the forefront of this movement. In his pre-GA talk he said, "Discern what God is up to in your neighbourhood. The reason I use the word 'discern' is because this is not a strategic plan, not a needs assessment of a community. It's not even an asset assessment of a community. Lay those things down. They're barriers to doing the discerning. You don't need demographics to tell you what's going on in the neighbourhood. Discern what God might be up to and out of it create an experiment."

Near the end of his presentation, Alan Roxburgh had the congregation break into small groups and read Luke 10:1-24. (So, go take a moment and read it now.)

After a lengthy period of reading and discussing the text in our groups and then as a whole, Roxburgh commissioned us:

"The harvest is not a metaphor for evangelism. Jesus is literally standing in the midst of fields that need to be harvested and there is a huge literal harvest and not enough people to take it in. Jesus is saying to them, 'Go to the towns and villages, become part of the households in taking in the harvest.' In other words: If you want to know what God is up to, you've got to become a part of the neighbourhood. You've got to dwell and become part of the way of life.

"Here is the other fun part. Why the instruction, 'Eat what is set before you?' The clue is, they've been sent to Galilee of the Gentiles. So, what's gonna happen? They're gonna be given pork, lobsters ... This text turns upside down many of our preconceptions. We're always thinking, 'What's the strategy, what's the program to go out and get people to come in?'"

This helps me cut through a lot of clutter: Dwell, work the vineyards, be with God. The vineyard is right outside the comfortable buildings and it is ripe for harvest. We must harvest it. But it will not be easy because our preconceptions will be challenged.

So simple. +

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.



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FROM THE MODERATOR

Crossing Generations

Learning from one another. *by* KAREN HORST



Here's a challenge to all: Let's plan to be radically countercultural in how we encourage faith development. Let's cross the generations as we learn and grow together so that seniors, millennials, children and youth teach and learn from one another.

Hardly radical, you say? I believe it is. In the past, faith formation was offered through structured learning for segregated ages. We called it Sunday school. Given the numbers of children who went through that system and are no longer engaged in faith as adults, clearly that model did not work well.

Today, trends in the church growth movement emphasize focusing on one particular demographic. Millennials, seniors or young adults are deliberately targeted. We also use models where experts share their experience and knowledge with the less knowledgeable. These models often segregate age groupings assuming people learn best and communicate best with their peers.

But the reality is that everyone is a teacher and a student. Our experience of Christian community is not complete if we mix only with those who make us comfortable. We have so much to learn from one another especially when we put generations together, a phenomenon that is happening too infrequently.

Placing age groups together in worship, study and mission provides full

Placing age groups together in worship, study and mission provides full sensory experiences, not just intellectual cognition. Mixing people intergenerationally means everyone can be both student and teacher.


sensory experiences, not just intellectual cognition. Mixing people intergenerationally means everyone can be both student and teacher. I have watched the ministry of babies to seniors and I have seen seniors care meaningfully with young parents. I have seen youth doing mission alongside adults and both have been enriched. Just this week I spent time with a 17-year-old as we discussed the differences between altruism and perfectionism. Both of us are still ruminating and learning from that discussion.

True intergenerational experiences are not easy to create. It is not about adults watching children do crafts. It is not about children being seen and not heard when around adults. It is not about youth entertaining us. Real

intergenerational experiences help all ages (or certain mixes of ages) sincerely learn from one another.

There are plenty of websites and programs that can stir our thinking about intergenerational learning. The deeper question is, do we care enough to do so? Are we prepared to do the hard work or are we more inclined to stick with the familiar patterns? Are we open to sensory activities, movement and play? Can we let go of long-held views and ways of doing things? Do we really believe in working for community or do we put more emphasis on our individual need?

I have seen a number of congregations doing Messy Church and Children in Worship and fully intergenerational worship services. We have the capacity in any size of congregation. Start now. Begin one new activity where all ages share an experience together. From a meaningful worship time to serving dinners to the disadvantaged, we are at our best when we do it together.

Acts 2:17: "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams." 

Rev. Karen Horst is minister at St. Andrew's, Orillia, Ont. She extends congratulations to her moderatorial successor, Rev. Douglas Rollwage.

People & Places

Find more online at presbyterianrecord.ca

Photographs can be uploaded at presbyterianrecord.ca.



ST. ANDREW'S, GUELPH, ONT.

Some young people at St. Andrew's planned and conducted this year's Good Friday service, providing music and leadership for one of the most significant events of the church year. These talented youth are Logan Borthwick, Alexander Muth, Leah Clack, Grace Clack, Sara Pavel and Zach Pavel.



VANCOUVER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

The Moderator of the General Assembly, Rev. Karen Horst (centre) paid a visit to the brand new Vancouver School of Theology building in February. With her are Rev. Dr. Blair Bertrand, minister at Calvin, Abbotsford, B.C., and Rev. Dr. Richard Topping, principal at VST.



ST. ANDREW'S, SHERBROOKE, QUE.

On March 13, the congregation at St. Andrew's celebrated dual anniversaries in the life of Wyatt Savage (left). The first was the anniversary of his birth 89 years ago, and the other was the anniversary of his ordination 60 years ago (yes, he became an elder at the ripe old age of 29.) Here he is with his wife, Louise, and Rev. John Barry Forsyth, minister at St. Andrew's, showing off some gifts from the grateful congregation.

THE OTHER SIX DAYS

Faith, Fashion and Falsity

Some good and not so good things to check out online. *by* **BRADLEY CHILDS**

FACEBOOK FAITH

The Christian Prayer Center is a Facebook page and website. It's basically a page where people can post prayers or pray for others. It has quite a bit of traffic. In fact, it's the largest site of its kind with nearly 1.3 million members! If you like the page, you will get updates and will see nice memes with inspirational quotes on them. And you will be able to pray for others or see inspirational testimonials of answered prayer. But there is a problem. It's a scam. The site runs on donations and leads members through an intentionally confusing process that makes people think they are refusing monthly automatic withdrawals when they are actually making donations. The prayer requests sent to the minister go nowhere as there is no minister on staff (just a fake persona) and the other counselling and services offered don't exist either. In fact, even the testimonials are fake, just like the stock footage of the supposed "contributors." The "good news" here is that they got caught. And now they owe \$7 million to their duped members. No new posts come from the page but the memes keep circulating along with links to the webpage. If you were one of those who "paid to pray" don't be ashamed. In fact, go ahead and go to that webpage again 'cause now it's a Washington State Attorney General's class action lawsuit complaint form.

FIND IT @ christianprayercenter.com/notice.html

VIDEO

The Word Church is a large and very, very rapidly growing church in Warrensville (Cleveland), Ohio. It's got a great website, complete with a number you can use to text in a donation. (By the way, how do I get one of those?) The Word Church's senior pastor is Rev. Dr.

**But isn't this just another lame attempt at self-ghettoization whereby Christians have to make a religious version of all things "secular"?
Nope, not at all.**

R. A. Vernon. You may have heard of him. He is an author and a bit of a controversial visionary. Through his leadership the Word Church has founded a for-profit company/community centre and moved the once small congregation onto four different campus sites for ministry. They are exploding with new people each and every week. It won't be long before they need a fifth building. Vernon is moving things along at breakneck speed. But... not without some bumps along the way. The latest "bump" is the popularity of a sermon illustration Vernon used about a year ago. It's currently making the rounds

on YouTube and after you watch it, you'll see what makes him intriguing and what makes him provocative at the same time. I think the word is tact?

FIND IT @ Search YouTube for The Grace Factor - FU (Forgive You)

FASHION

What would you say if I told you there was a specifically Christian Fashion Week? Because guess what! There is a specifically Christian Fashion Week. Now I know what you're thinking. Cornball T-shirts that say things like "JC/DC" with "Jesus Christ/Demon Crusher" or other such nonsense on them. But that's not it at all. I'm talking about high fashion. But isn't this just another lame attempt at self-ghettoization whereby Christians have to make a religious version of all things "secular"? Nope, not at all. Although arguably more modest in taste than other fashion shows, Christian Fashion Week is an organization dedicated to affordable, sustainable fashion that is made by people who are paid a fair wage, and it holds to certain ethical practices related to hiring and casting models and other workers in the industry. The organization rightly points out that fashion is an industry overflowing with potential wrongs to right. It sounds funny to say it out loud (or in print) but I think I support Christian Fashion Week.

FIND IT @ christianfashionweek.com 

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at Fairview, Vancouver.

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see also stcolumba.ca.

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harryjbradley@gmail.com.

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Palmerston, Knox; Full-time new grad or 3/4 time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Kathy Morden, PO Box 8, Neustadt ON N0G 2M0; 519-321-1942; kcpc-revkathy@wightman.ca.

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905-822-8911;

revgalemacdonald@gmail.com.

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Moderator Rev. John Henderson, PO

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henderson.johncharles@gmail.com.

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Obituary

Bynum, William Arnice,

faithful member and elder of Knox Presbyterian Church, Dundas, Ont., died February 11, 2016. A kind, caring man.

FOR THE JOURNEY

Reborn Leadership

Rebirth in the church in the 21st century, part two. *by* DAVID WEBBER

SOME WOULD SAY THAT the Church is dying out and failing in the 21st century, at least in the Canadian context. But is something else happening besides failure? I have become convinced that the Lord of the Church is reforming or rebirthing His church in this century after the example of the church in the New Testament. What is it going to be like? Last month I discussed what a born again church might look like in terms of church buildings. This month I want to look at leadership and the sacraments.

LEADERSHIP

The Constantinian thrust that gave rise to the Church in the 4th century over time turned the leadership into a hierarchy of institutionally ordained officers or clergy operating primarily in a pastor-teacher-administrator mode to serve the institution. As in other denominations, for the main part, that is what we still know as normative in the Presbyterian Church in Canada today.

In the apostolic church of the New Testament, leadership was much different. For one thing, any split between clergy and laity did not seem to exist. Leadership was grassroots, extremely well trained in situ, set apart to serve a particular function and expressing a diverse five-fold ministry of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. These functions (as opposed to offices) were for equipping the whole people of God to serve as ministers of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11) Leadership was also often itinerant and/or part-time or "tent-maker" in style.

This will become the way leadership will develop within the church in this post-Christendom era as well. In the



church born again for the 21st century there will cease to be a priestly hierarchical ordained leadership, but leadership will be entirely function based, come from the grassroots of particular faith communities and be well trained and equipped in situ. Stone and mortar theological schools anchored in one or two large centres will not survive but rather digitally-based equippers travelling the information highway to do training will become normal. Many, if not most, leaders will not make their whole living from the church. Beyond the local community, some leaders may function as itinerate overseers and function in an episcopal manner with several faith communities together. Obviously a radical shift will have to be

made in how we raise up and equip such leaders.

Leadership that emphasizes a five-fold function in ministry will be born again in this century. We can look for the day when leaders will once again be chosen on the basis of being able to function as apostles (faith pioneers sent to work outside the faith community), prophets (faith encouragers working within the faith community), evangelists (faith initiators bearing the gospel), as well as pastors (spiritual directors and caregivers) and teachers (Christian educators). These are the biblical functions of church leaders, not the ordained office of priestly ruling and administering an institution.

All this being said, there is a completely different skill set needed to lead and function as described above. And yet, in my opinion, the leaders being called, supported and equipped today are, for the main part, still being trained as priests to serve an institutional congregation that is housed in a large building, preferably with a pipe organ or at least an ➤



FOR THE JOURNEY, continued

amplified church band (i.e. a Christendom church). I wince every time I slip into a mostly empty church building where 20 or so believers are being led in worship designed for a congregation of 10 times as many. It's painful. Yet this is the style of leadership still promoted, supported and trained in our church. We will need a radical shift in the ordering, supporting and training of our leadership for equipping the small intimate faith communities I envision in our future.

SACRAMENTS


In the apostolic church it is obvious from the New Testament that what we have come to call the sacraments were not practiced as they are in the Christendom church we have inherited. Communion was celebrated as a real community meal. (Acts 2:46-47) Baptism was practiced as a celebration of conversion and entrance into the community. (Acts 8:25-40) Baptism and the Lord's Supper belonged to the community of faith and were unabashedly celebrated by the community of faith whenever they met, or in the case of baptism, whenever they had need. Communion was all about community and baptism was all about entering into community. The presence of "clergy" was never an issue. In fact, some notable New Testament leaders did not see it as their place to preside, because they were coming in from outside a particular faith community and to do so would have been divisive. (1 Corinthians 1:14-17) Baptism and communion were celebrations and they belonged to the faith community not to clergy or an institution.

With the dawn of the age of Christendom there was a huge institutionalisation of grace through the sacraments. The sacraments were no longer primarily a celebration of community but a dispersal of grace through the institution at the hand of its official

clerics. It was an oppressive way of control that spawned a revolt that we know as the Reformation. The problem is that there has been slippage ever since the time of Hus, Luther, Bucer, Calvin and Knox, to the point that we who pride ourselves now as their descendants in the faith look strangely more like the medieval church they revolted against.

In the church born again for the post-Christendom era, there will be a return to the apostolic way, not so much because faith communities don't have the resources to pay for clergy but because of the need to reclaim the rightful place of baptism and the Lord's Supper in the faith community. The church, born again for the 21st century, will redeem and reclaim baptism and communion and will even adopt other biblical symbols and events as well—foot washing and anointing come to mind.

In my library I have a copy of the *Euchologion* from 19th-century Scotland that has resources that could enable lay people to celebrate communion and baptism. I have a copy of a similar book from the same time period from the Methodist Church in Canada, designed for lay readers. The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand, has had non-clergy presiding over communion for over 20 years and baptism for over 10 years, and in the words of Bruce Fraser, retired mission advisor for the Synod of Otago and Southland, "the sky has not fallen." Presbyterian and other denominations around the world have made similar moves. Honestly, how hard can this be for us?

To be continued ... 

Rev. David Webber, now retired, was the founding missionary in B.C.'s Cariboo house church ministry. This is the second of a three part series. webberink@telus.net.

From the November 1875 issue of the Home and Foreign Record.

Four magazines were amalgamated to create the Presbyterian Record starting in January 1876. This is the announcement from one of them:

THE FOLLOWING EXTRACTS FROM THE PROSPECTUS OF THE PROPOSED MAGAZINE WE LEAVE BEFORE OUR READERS:

Its chief object will be to acquaint the members and adherents of the Presbyterian Church in Canada with every department of its work; to enlist the sympathies of all in its various missionary and benevolent enterprises, and, by preserving a record of the proceedings of its judicatories, to hand down to succeeding generations a history of the Church. ...

With the narrow spirit, that is blind to the imperfections of its own system, that sees no good in other systems, and that prides itself only on its so-called prestige, the Presbyterian Record will have no sympathy. In the expressive words used in the basis of Union, "it will cherish affection towards the whole Church of God," and it will present from time to time such a summary of religious intelligence generally as may be found practicable.

There will be no place found in its columns for controversy. It will "seek peace and ensue it." Believing in the brotherhood of the whole Christian family, it will endeavour to promote their unity by inculcating principles of charity, mutual forbearance, and kindly sympathy.

With these aims the Presbyterian Record will, in January next, ask countenance and support from the thirty thousand patrons of the four existing magazines, and if it shall find favour in their sight, from twenty thousand more. It will aspire to be a welcome visitor in the minister's study, in the merchant's parlour, at the mechanic's and the farmer's fireside, and in the backwoodsman's lonely shanty.

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will be there.**

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RECORD

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Called to the Church

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Respect

The Bible sets the tone for
the church's conversations.





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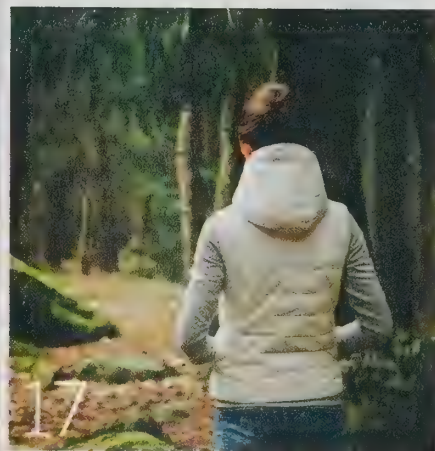


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JUNE 2016



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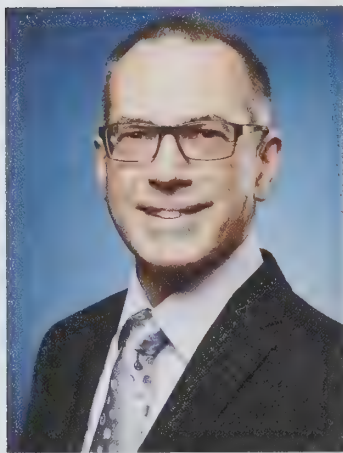
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Although they might not agree with every article in the publication, they felt we were trying to be fair and strike a balance in our reporting.

FOR THE RECORD

Supportive Readers

Thank you for your feedback. *by* DAVID HARRIS

The first thing I want to do is say thank you to the 380 ministers who completed our online survey and the 30 people who wrote me in response to the April editorial with suggestions on how we could improve the *Record*.

Taken together, the feedback was both good and ... well, let's put it this way: we've either tried or considered all the business suggestions people made.

In the main, however, it was gratifying to receive so many positive comments. Shirley Huckins summed it up, saying: "The *Record* is an excellent magazine. I read it from cover to cover and find the articles informative and interesting. I would say just keep on doing what you are doing—which is a great job!"

And those who expressed displeasure—mostly in the online survey—were mostly expressing their unhappiness with the denomination and with the fact that the *Record* isn't an official denominational publication and so doesn't express an "official" line.

As far as I know, even though the *Record* was owned by the church for most of its existence, it was never the official voice of the denomination. It always had editorial independence to some degree.

Which leads to another interesting observation. Several ministers commented in the online survey that they would never subscribe unless it reflected true Reformed theology. Others opined that the church needed to do that first. Of course, an almost equal number of ministers thought the *Record* "too conservative."

Which leads naturally to the conclusion of the majority that, although they might not agree with every article in the publication, they felt we were trying to be fair and strike a balance in our reporting.

These readers didn't have any suggestions as to what to change. They are aware of the decline in publishing and the sliding numbers of the denomination. (For the past quarter century, the Presbyterian Church in Canada has been losing about 2,800 members a year; the *Record* about 2,000, mostly through the Every Home Plan. As reported in the May issue, the *Record* may not be solvent next year.)

Quite a number of people proposed switching entirely to digital editions of the magazine. (And quite a number were also unaware of our digital presence! We have been publishing a full digital edition of the magazine for several years. We also have a Facebook page as well as a Facebook community page. All that is in addition to our standard website that has many extras that won't fit in the magazine.)

But printing and mailing the magazine actually costs little, because we receive the standard federal magazine grant, which covers about 80 per cent of that cost.

So, thank you for all your suggestions. And thank you for supporting our work in so many ways. It's good to know that we are generally on the right track.

It's just a matter of money, now. 

David Harris is the Record's publisher and editor.

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

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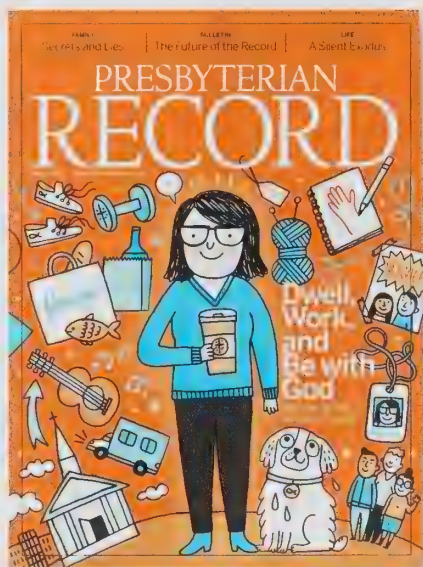
CLYDE ERVINE, author of this month's cover story on Respect, was raised in a happy, hectic Presbyterian home in Northern Ireland, one of four siblings. He served as a pastor in Sutton, Niagara Falls, and Toronto, spent six years as director of pastoral studies at Presbyterian College, Montreal, then back into the pulpits of Central, Hamilton, and now Knox, St. Catharines, Ont.

CONNIE WARDLE grew up as a preacher's kid in small town Ontario, hanging out at Presbyterian Young People's Society events and wearing cheesy WWJD bracelets. She has been a writer with the *Record* since 2008. She suffers from a serious book addiction, a persistent case of vegetarianism that she caught when she was a kid, and a nagging desire to make the world a better place by the time she leaves it than it was when she got here.



BRADLEY CHILDS grew up in an Amish community to independent Baptist parents, studied at two Baptist schools, two multi-denominational schools and one Presbyterian school. At a point in his journey he saw the true light of John Calvin shining brightly as if it were preordained. Brad has been writing The Other Six Days column a for seven years now. Despite all the nonsense and cheekiness his topic is this: What does faith look like? What is the church and what is not?

Letters



Write to us: LETTERS@PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA

A note from the senior editor:

As mentioned last month, if you have sent a Letter to the Editor over the past several months on the issue of human sexuality, you will find it online.

Regardless of the stance or tone of any one letter, collectively they form a rich profile of our denomination as we continue to think deeply about our faith.

The letters published below have all

been edited to fit. The full-length submissions are also available online at presbyterianrecord.ca.

ANDREW FAIZ

Reconcile Christianity and Science

Re Resurrection-Shaped Renewal, March

What was religiously thought to be personal renewal is really the renewal

of the likeness of ourselves within mankind. In our intrinsic nature we are what we come from. We are not separated from it. The planet is us. We are the planet. Irrespective of the variations in earthly life-forms, they are served by the same underlying structure. It is only in their final physical representation that they are different. As the planet evolves so do we evolve. As the planet changes its forms of expression so do we. We too are transformed. The likeness of what we are as individuals pertains to our innate being which remains the same for us all.

The renewal of all things is sustained by the Law of Conservation of Mass, which states that the transformation of matter into a different form rather than its destruction is the correct interpretation of reality.

DENNIS SUTHERLAND, VICTORIA

Sad to Tell It Like It Is

Re Encouragement Tour, April

I found this a very sad report; if the leaders of the Presbyterian Church are in such bad shape it's no wonder the denomination is declining. I always thought someone joining the ministry answers a call to serve God, and serve their congregation, rather than just seeking personal job satisfaction. Is it all just about better salaries and benefits? Or discovering yourself? I sincerely hope not; I'll keep all of you and all the congregations that are also suffering because of this situation in my prayers. Good to get this situation out in the open for honest discussion.

NINA RACINE, VIA EMAIL

What an excellent cover story! Tells it like it is for many ministers today and which, even as it offers remedies, critiques them at the same time. It is simply refreshing to name things as they stand. In this way the article offers respect for many who question their vocation.

Great work by Fred Stewart, and great work writing this up.

REV. NICK ATHANASIADIS, TORONTO

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Invite Everyone to the Table

Re Beyond the Rules, April

While reading this article, it struck me hard as the author suggested we invite outcasts to our table. Who wants to do that? Obviously, that's the point... but it struck me hard because I have been struggling with this my whole life... the outcasts and the needy that is. I have always worked on the sidelines with other community members, and even I would not like to invite an outcast to dinner. Nor would I want to be the outcast invited to said dinner.

There are only people, people having different experiences in life due to their circumstances, and sometimes choices, but mostly due to past trauma. All people struggle, some struggle and are shunned by society, and some of us struggle and still fit in. University educated people sometimes live in squalor. People struggle to see the purpose in their lives and try to live as fully as they can at that moment. We could be living in a tent, or a mansion. We could have a boat, or a dog. We could have an addiction, or self-mutilate, or none of the above. We all struggle.

With God in our midst, we are all more than our struggles. Then, we can throw out the outcasts and the needy and the addicts into the trash where they belong.

Thanks for listening, and amen.

MARLENE BUWALDA-LIAO, VIA EMAIL

Generosity of Others

Born Again, April

While Mr. Webber makes some thoughtfully considered observations, it must not be forgotten that the work of the Cariboo House Church Ministries might have been very different had it not been for the yearly grants from Presbyterians Sharing, the periodic short-term grants from the Synod of British Columbia, and gifts from across the church through 'Friends of the Cariboo.'

REV. HERB HILDER, PRINCE GEORGE, B.C.

We're not in Christendom Anymore

Re April Issue

Thank you so much for the April 2016 issue. I even renewed a long-dormant personal subscription!

I especially appreciated your contributions highlighting people at the margins, in our church and our society: the column by Vivian Ketchum, the faith feature, "Beyond the Rules" by Laurence DeWolfe, the Moderator's column, and a complementary piece by David Webber, addressing our denominational attachment to our buildings and other historical structures, and, most of all, the straight-talking Pop Christianity column by Andrew Faiz, "What We're Really Talking About."

As the article by Connie Wardle ('We're Not There Yet') relays in a quote attributed to elder Aubrey Hawton, "I'm tired of it being 'us and them.'" Amen, Aubrey! Let's by all means include the voices of all parts of the body of Christ in our discernment and heed the gospel imperative to listen, without judging, and embrace all who are on the margins, as Jesus did.

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- ☐ Volunteering (men's & women's group, prayer)
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We are grateful for all you have done, and pledge our continued efforts in providing "A community of compassion. A place of hope" for those in need.

No one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burden of another. Thank you from all of us at ehm.

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POP CHRISTIANITY

Belonging

We all gather at the table. *by* ANDREW FAIZ

On the Sunday of the fall-back time change in 1971, Mom and I went to a modest brown building for 10:15 a.m. We had been in Canada about a month; we had moved into a three-bedroom apartment, with mattresses on the floor and fruit cartons for tables. We kids were registered at a public school.

Mom and I waited outside that church, checking our watches. It said 10:30 on the sign; our watches moved past that time. It also said 'Presbyterian' on the sign. Mom's dad had been a Presbyterian minister in British India and family legend said he helped found a Presbyterian seminary in Punjab province. (It was funded by the PC(USA); he was the first indigenous clergyperson. There's a plaque outside the seminary today commemorating his seminal contribution.)

When our watches declared 11 a.m., the minister arrived. Then others. They explained the time change to us. We sat awkwardly in the hall as strange people zipped by us for the next half hour. The sanctuary was an open room where chairs had to be set. It was very different from the cathedral where we had last worshipped in Lahore.

But the people were kind and the strangeness passed. Early in '72 Dad had to go to Yemen where he had a job through the United Nations. The Sunday before he left, he made an announcement at the start of worship: "I have to go away for work and I'm leaving my family in your care."



The conversations really are about belonging—who belongs in the church and who does not. It's an absurd question and it comes from anxiety and stress.

The congregation took that responsibility seriously. I can draw a straight line from that Sunday to where I am today. Gateway Community Church and this denomination have had a rich and strong influence on my life. An immigrant family was embraced and nurtured in a church. We were allowed to belong. Mom started teaching Sunday school and later joined the session. I was also ordained an elder a decade later.

Forty years later times have changed. Gateway Community is no more. The denomination itself is shrinking, the coffers are stressed, and doctrinal orthodoxies are questioned. The very purpose and direction of the church is being challenged. Even Jesus is being rent—"Christ-like" and "Christ-centred" are codes for varying theologies.

Money and sexuality are the major subjects of conversation. With sexuality—while the primary question is about marriage and ordination, the tone of the conversation has largely seemed to be about who gets to sit in the pews. Money talk also skews the same way—sessions, congregations, presbyteries and the national church get busy listing those things that are most important. Children's programming falls quickly, followed soon enough by mission work.

The conversations really are about belonging—who belongs in the church and who does not. It's an absurd question and it comes from anxiety and stress. If you read through the *Record* just from this year, you'll feel that again and again: Times are changing—that's a good thing. Times are changing—that's a bad thing.

Times have changed; that's a thing. That's all. What hasn't changed is the invitation to gather around the table to partake in the salvation offered through Christ. That will never change. The rest is sturm und drang. ✚

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

BULLETIN

Community and World News

BE CHURCH

Emergency Care

Presbyterians help those from Fort McMurray. *by* GILLIAN SECORD

When they first evacuated on Tuesday, May 3, many of the residents of Fort McMurray, Alta., had no idea how bad things were going to be. “We were told we were leaving because of the smoke. It was so thick, we could barely see through it, and people were starting to have trouble breathing,” said Rev. Lisa Aide, minister at Faith, Fort McMurray. “We thought it would be just a day or two before we could return, and didn’t take too much stuff.”

Her story is not unique. According to Rev. Harry Currie, minister at First, Edmonton, a city where many evacuees fled: “There were people coming in without >

A burned vehicle in Fort McMurray, Alta. May 10, 2016.

BE CHURCH. continued

their wallets, in pyjamas, even families coming in split up because their kids had been in school and evacuated one way while the parents in a different part of the city went the other way.”

Evacuees scattered around Alberta found refuge in 12 reception centers set up by the Red Cross. One of the largest of these was in the Edmonton Expo Centre, where many came to register even if they didn't need food or shelter. Registering made it easier for friends and family members to find each other. The centre also offered financial assistance and allowed people to replace IDs and driver's licenses that might have been left behind.

According to Rev. John Dowds, a Presbyterian minister and the Edmonton city chaplain, over 16,200 people registered at the Expo Centre.

The large gym was at one point filled with cots and people clinging to what they had managed to bring with them. “They’ve really worked to help find housing ASAP, so they don’t have to stay in the gym. When people first arrived, we had 2,000 staying here.” By the week of May 8, the number staying at the Expo Centre was down to 400.

Evacuees stayed in a variety of places, many of them with family and friends, or in cottages and motor homes. Hotels in the area offered rooms, and the University of Alberta opened up empty residences to house people.

Due to the efforts of the Red Cross, most families found places to stay. Other groups, like Presbyterian World Service & Development, helped to raise money for short and long-term

relief efforts. Local congregations assisted where they could by volunteering and donating money.

Presbyterian clergy provided chaplaincy care at the Expo Centre. Organized by Dowds, volunteer ministers from a variety of denominations worked in shifts. “The chaplains were there to support people in whatever way seems appropriate, whether that’s praying with them, giving someone a hug, or helping to carry things,” Dowds said. “We’re very blessed to have had almost 50 people volunteer their time like this.

“It’s amazing to see the mobilization of people working together for the common good.” +

Gillian Secord is the Record's summer intern.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH DID NOT SEEK REFUND UNDER TERMS OF SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH in Canada contributed \$1.3 million, its maximum commitment under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, with the understanding that even if other church bodies did not meet their fundraising targets the PCC “would not receive any refund,” the church said in a statement.

Under the terms of the landmark 2006 agreement, the four main church

groups that operated residential schools agreed to provide funding for healing programs among aboriginal people. Fifty Catholic groups, which together operated the largest number of schools, were expected to make the largest contributions totaling \$79 million. This included using their “best efforts” to raise \$25 million for healing and reconciliation programs.

The levels of funding expected of the other church parties—the Anglican, United and Presbyterian denominations—were linked to the level of funds raised by the Catholic groups. This is a standard clause which is meant to ensure that all the church parties are treated the same way under the terms of the agreement, explained Rev. Stephen Kendall, the General Assembly’s principal clerk.

However, the Catholic fundraising program brought in only \$3.7 million of its \$25 million goal, and a miscommunication

between a federal and church lawyer resulted in the Catholic groups being released from their remaining fundraising responsibilities.

This made the other churches eligible to keep a portion of the funds they had gathered to meet their own obligations under the agreement.

The Presbyterian Church had already contributed \$1.3 million to its Settlement Fund—the amount expected from the denomination if the Catholic groups met their fundraising goals.

“Yes, we could have been in a position to claim a refund,” said Kendall, “but right at the beginning we said this was a firm amount we were contributing.”

The Anglican and United churches reduced their financial contributions by \$2.7 million and \$450,000 respectively, as permitted by the terms of the agreement. + —Connie Wardle

The Record Picks Up Two Dozen Awards

THE *PRESBYTERIAN RECORD* was named among the best Canadian church magazines of 2015, picking up two dozen awards at the end of April for excellent work done by its editors, writers, art director, designer, columnists, bloggers and freelancers.

The Canadian Church Press awarded the *Record* third place in the category of General Excellence. That was among 16 awards the *Record* received from CCP. The *Record* picked up another eight from the Associated Church Press, the association of North American church publications.

Senior editor Andrew Faiz's monthly column Pop Christianity received a first at CCP and a third place at ACP. Faiz also received honours from both organizations for interviews (Can We Talk, January, and Beyond Words, February), photography (from Ethiopia and Eastern Europe), and news reporting (with Amy MacLachlan). Faiz's article on refugees in Eastern Europe (On the Road, October) was named second in the A.C. Forrest Award at CCP "for excellence in socially conscious religious journalism."

Managing editor Amy MacLachlan, along with sharing a third for news reporting, received a first in service journalism for her article on peanut allergies (It's About Hospitality, January).

Art Director Caroline Bishop and designer Salina Vanderhorn were named five times by the two associations for excellent work on cover design (July/August), table of contents, photo spread (Green Famine, March) and feature layout (Print is Dead, February).

Rev. Tony Plomp was honoured with a first in the category of theological reflection and a third in the category of personal reflection for an article about his battle with cancer, The Beginning of Life (October) at CCP.

Rev. Bradley Childs picked up three awards: a third for his column The Other Six Days, and two for his opinion piece We All Benefit From Racism (July/August).

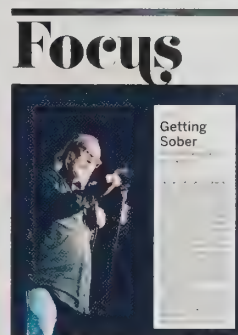
Rev. Matthew Ruttan received a second place citation at CCP for his blog featured on presbyterianrecord.ca.

Richard Lett, a member at St. Andrew's, Toronto, received a first at CCP and a third at ACP in humour writing for his article Getting Sober (March).

Blogger Becky Roushorne-Lau received an ACP award



2015 Winners



of merit for her reflection His Name Was Alan.

Stephen Kennedy, editor of the Pentecostal *Testimony* magazine, received an ACP first for a poem published in the *Record*, Afar Feast (March).

The *Record* is produced monthly by a small team led by editor and publisher David Harris. Along with Faiz, MacLachlan, Bishop and Vanderhorn, Connie Wardle is the senior writer and Deborah Leader the subscriptions manager. Wil McGilvery manages the website.

The *Record* reported last month that congregations are continuing to cancel their Every Home Plans due to declining offerings. The sharp loss in subscriptions may force the magazine to end its 140 year legacy by 2017. —Record staff

VIEWPOINT

‘Concerned with the Vast Shift’

PSALT has sent letters to sessions and presbyteries.

by ANDREW FAIZ

A GROUP NAMED PSALT—short for Presbyterians Standing for Apostolic Love and Truth—has sent letters to all sessions and presbyteries within the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and has bought advertisements in the *Presbyterian Record* for the past few months, to encourage a “more biblically faithful expression of Christian discipleship and witness.”

The *Record* has received notes of concern regarding PSALT’s letter. PSALT has no official standing within the courts of the PCC, though it is comprised of members within the church concerned about possible changes to doctrine. The letter does not breach any polity, though it is an unorthodox means of communicating within the PCC tradition.

According to the letter, PSALT supports the PCC’s 1994 Report on Human Sexuality. One of letter’s signatories, Rev. Grant Gunnink, minister at Valleyview, Calgary, Alta., wrote to the *Record* to explain: “While the ... move to revise the PCC’s position ... was the catalyst for our formation, PSALT is more concerned with the vast shift in the underlying ‘tectonic plates’ of our theology.”

PSALT, he explains, upholds five affirmations: “Christ (his centrality and uniqueness), Scripture (its revealed nature and authority), the Holy Spirit (the unity of Word and Spirit in guiding the Church), discipleship (the integration of faith with obedience), and mission (bearing

distinctive Christian witness in post-Christian culture).”

PSALT sees the current conversation on human sexuality as part of an

PSALT supports the PCC’s 1994 Report on Human Sexuality. ‘While the ... move to revise the PCC’s position ... was the catalyst, PSALT is more concerned with the vast shift in the underlying “tectonic plates” of our theology.’

ongoing movement within the PCC. “Recommendations of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee have sparked discussion about the uniqueness of Christ; the Committee on Church Doctrine has addressed overtures regarding our scriptural understanding; the Assembly Council’s strategic plan to prioritize

congregations and the biennial [General] Assemblies proposal strike to the heart of our ecclesiology, and how we believe the Spirit speaks.”

Gunnink goes on to state: “With new laws on assisted death, the church’s ‘culture of life’ is cast in high relief against our society’s ‘culture of death.’ Our truth and reconciliation journey with Aboriginal peoples also requires a clear, biblical understanding of what repentance and Christian engagement of other cultures means.”

Rev. Wes Denyer, minister at Rosedale, Toronto, has been a vocal advocate for progressive issues within the PCC and was involved in writing the online open letter found at pccforinclusion.com. In an email to the *Record* he stated: “PSALT is correct that the church is faced with very large shifts in how we live out our faith in the world. This situation offers the church a wonderful opportunity to discover what it is to be Christ-like in the midst of diversity and massive social change. ... I don’t know what the church will look like in 50 years, or even in 25 years. But I’m not worried about the church. We have companions in this wilderness. We have each other, and we have our relationship to God. We have Christ and the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit; and we’ve been through many other wilderness areas before, with just exactly those same companions.”

Andrew Faiz is the Record’s senior editor.

Faith.

Deepening your relationship with God



KALEIDOSCOPICALLY

Space to Grow

Reflecting on motherhood and milestones.

by KATIE MUNNIK

At THE END OF THE MONTH, my firstborn is turning 10. A milestone for both of us.

Last year at this time, we were packing boxes, saying goodbye to friends and moving cities. The Spouse and I worked hard to make the transition as smooth as possible for each other and for our kids, but change always requires so much courage, doesn't it? There were inevitably rocky stretches along our road. This year, we understand all that a little more, and still we see change on the horizon. A 10th birthday >

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY, continued

is a leap into double digits and also an ending. Not the ending of childhood—we are not there yet—but we are at the end of a first stage with our first child. And I feel a little dizzy at the thought.

I took her photo last summer, standing in front of the National Gallery in Ottawa. She looked so tall, all legs and long hair caught like a flag in the wind. She had been playing with her brothers underneath the huge sculpture of a spider that stands near the entrance to the gallery, its thin legs arched like the gallery's own iconic roofline. For a moment, she paused and turned towards me with a grin, so I snapped a photo. She looked lovely.

Later, she said that she felt little. It was a bit like standing in a church. Everything was so high above her.

The French-American artist Louise Bourgeois created this sculpture in 1999, and since then it has been cast many times for galleries around the world. It is called "*Maman*," and is one of many spiders she had made, beginning with simple ink and charcoal sketches dating back to 1947. She played

with the spider image throughout her life as a way of honouring her own mother, Josephine, a weaver who worked with tapestries in the family's textile restoration workshop in Paris. Through her art and her writing, Bourgeois reflected on the cleverness of spiders, the resourcefulness and quiet grace with which they weave and the complicated juxtapositions they inspire. *Maman* is the largest of Bourgeois' spiders, and yet in it she evokes thoughts of fragility and strength, of protection, enclosure and perhaps threat, too, of daintiness, vulnerability and tough, nurturing love. When you stand underneath her, as my long-legged daughter did, you can see that she holds a clutch of marble eggs in her belly, these promises of new life looking both protected and captured.

Motherhood is a complicated place.

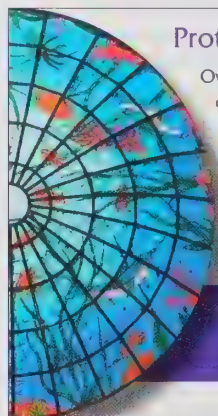
But strange and radical images of motherhood can be useful, too. They can awaken us to new ways of seeing what it means to be children of God. The Bible has many stories of strange mothering. Some are obscure and almost forgotten,

emerging to surprising light in the histories and the prophets. Others stand giant among us like Bourgeois' spider, casting strange shadows. Like Moses' mother who made the Nile an extension of her own body to hide and cradle her growing child. Like Mary, who knew that her Yes means the glory of Love among us, and yet her heart still lurched when her son was lost on the way home from Jerusalem. And like that son, who used the image of a mother hen sheltering her chicks beneath her wings to teach his friends that mothering love is not gendered and cannot be quenched.

That is the love that knit us together in our mother's womb, and that's the love we're given when we are given children.

Ten years ago, when I still cradled my daughter in my belly, I looked around our tiny apartment and prayed that we would be able to fill it with all the love, faith and hope she needed. Now, I see that we cannot fill spaces. Rather, we need to keep them open. With open hands, we give and receive. With open hearts, we learn how to love. That's how we grow, isn't it? Grow and we watch the children grow around us, each of us learning to let go a little that we might find the ways in which we are held together. For my daughter's birthday this year, I would like to give her open spaces, sheltered enough that she will feel loved, and yet high enough above her head that she will find the space to grow. ☩

Katie Munnik lives in Cardiff, Wales, with three kids and a professor husband. She blogs at The Messy Table on presbyterianrecord.ca



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The Widow of Nain (1927) oil painting by Harold Copping

PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

God's Realm of Reversals

Miracles are possible. *by* LAURENCE DEWOLFE

Third Sunday after Pentecost
June 5, 2016
Luke 7:11-17

We meet Jesus on his way from his first base of operations in Capernaum to his hometown. As they pass the outskirts of Nain, just a few miles from Nazareth, Jesus and his friends meet

a funeral procession.

Luke gives us some details. The mourners walk with a widow. Her only son has died. This is how Luke frames miracle stories. An important relationship has been broken.

Miracle stories in all four gospels function as theological statements and literary devices. Whether or not they happened exactly as described isn't the point. Arguing about that is a waste of time. ➤

PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY, continued

Stick with the story. According to all four gospels, wherever Jesus went, amazing things happened. Amazing to us, anyway. The original audience of the gospel stories would have expected signs and wonders to accompany Jesus. They wanted to hear what the storytellers made of the miracles.

Stand in the main street of Nain. The crowd you're part of meets another crowd. It seems everyone in town is in a funeral procession. Hear the official mourners weep and wail. See the men straining under more than the weight of a body.

What will Jesus do? You've just heard that Jesus healed a Roman officer's slave. Without a touch. Just with words. Maybe that's why you're following Jesus now. To see what's next. Can Jesus also raise the dead?

Luke wants us to focus on the relationship. The harsh reality this grieving woman faces. To say she died with her son isn't an exaggeration. No husband to protect her. Now no son to provide for her. The village that helped her raise her child can only offer her moral support and the occasional scrap of charity. Good people

**Each healing is a
turning back of forces
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withholds full life from
vulnerable people.**

will turn away from her, afraid they'll catch her bad luck.


Does Jesus know this? As a man of his time, he should. Luke just says Jesus has compassion for the woman. Compassion is one of God's attributes. God's covenant partners can claim it. Jesus says, "Don't weep." He doesn't forbid natural grief. He silences the mourners. Their world stands still.

Jesus says, "Young man, rise!" His mother can live again. He and she can return to their home, and their community.

The people respond with holy fear. They know God is at work among them. They hail Jesus as a great prophet. His presence is proof of God's favour. The miracle isn't the point. It's simply proof that, through Jesus, God's reign is breaking out on earth. The coming of the kingdom is what matters.

The kingdom Jesus proclaims and embodies isn't a world of miracles. It is a realm of reversals. Reversals prophets proclaimed and Jesus fulfilled. Each healing is a turning back of forces that drive us, and the world toward death. Each miracle overturns an order that withholds full life from vulnerable people. Luke and the other gospel writers build their case for Jesus by describing mighty acts that turn the world upside down. But they don't want us just to see Jesus as a miracle-worker.

No, the kingdom of God isn't a world of miracles. It's a realm of reversals in which miracles are possible. Most miracles today come on the instalment plan, piece by piece, through prayer and sweat. Reversals call for both faith and hard work. Neither you nor I can raise the dead. But we can stand for life in the kingdom of death. We can stand with vulnerable people and work with them toward fullness and freedom. We can bring hope that defeats fear. Light that overcomes darkness. We know gospel truth.

You and I also have more worldly power and influence, and more wealth than we would ever admit. Will we use them to turn the world for good? 

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe is minister at Glenview, Toronto.



150th Anniversary St. Paul's Presbyterian Church

Prince Albert, SK
Sat. June 18, 2pm

Guest Preacher: Rev. Angus McGillivray
www.saintpaulspa.org 306-764-4771



RENEWAL

The Parable of a Lighthouse

A meditation. *introduced by* **FRED STEWART**

In 2004 as a meditation at a ministerial meeting, our local Catholic priest read us this powerful story. I often think of it and it challenges me and should challenge us all.

(Many unattributed versions of this story exist online; it was written in 1953 by Rev. Dr. Theodore O. Wedel, a canon of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.)
—Fred Stewart

ON A DANGEROUS SEACOAST where shipwrecks often occur there was a once a crude little life-saving station. It was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea; with no thought for themselves, they went out day or night tirelessly searching for the lost.

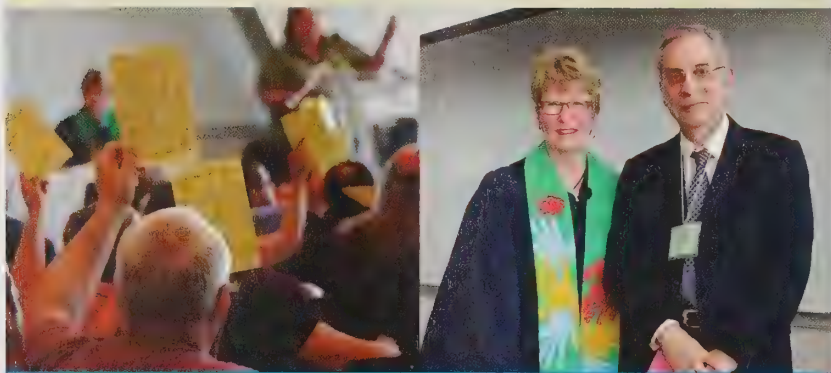
So many lives were saved by this little station that it became famous. Some of those who were saved, and others, wanted to be associated with the station and give of their time and money to support its work. ➤

Presbyterians Sharing

visioning the future of our church



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RENEWAL, continued

New boats were bought and new crews were trained. The little station grew.

Some of the new members were unhappy with the crude building. They felt the rescued needed a more comfortable place as their first refuge.

The building was enlarged, with nicer furniture. Now the life-saving station became a popular gathering place, and was re-decorated beautifully and furnished as a sort of club.

Less of the members were now interested in going to sea on life-saving missions, so they hired lifeboat crews to do this work.

About this time a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in boatloads of cold, wet and half-drowned people.

They were dirty and sick, and some of them had black skin, and some spoke a strange language, and the beautiful new club was considerably messed up.

At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's life-saving activities as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal life pattern of the club.

But some members insisted that life-saving was their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a life-saving station. But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the lives of all the various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own life-saving station down the coast. They did. And the same thing happened to them.

If you visit the seacoast today you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent in those waters, only now most of the people drown. ☕

Rev. Fred Stewart is executive director of the Renewal Fellowship.
fred@pastorfred.ca

SHARING WITNESS

My Church. My World

The colourful sunset is the stained glass window.

by VIVIAN KETCHUM

MY CHURCH IS not made of brick and mortar. It does not have hard wooden seats or songbooks. My church is not contained within four walls of a building. The music is not from a choir or a church instrument. My church is vastly different from a conventional one.

The fall air was crisp, but there was still warmth to be felt sitting in the sun. I was surrounded by the changing seasons. The trees were covered in their bright colours, yellow, orange and brown. My hands rested on the

fading brown grass. I could smell the grass beneath me. I looked up and saw the bright blue sky amongst the colours of the trees. I felt so tiny. So insignificant within its vastness. Birds could be heard chirping amongst the hidden branches. Somewhere far off within the tree line, a chattering squirrel could be heard. The wind blew softly through woods—a soft whisper of promises to the one that can hear it.

This is my church setting. It's where I feel most comfortable talking to the Creator. >



SHARING WITNESS, continued

The birds chirping in the bush and the wind blowing through the trees are my choir. The woods are the walls and the blue sky with the clouds are the tall ceiling of my church. The colourful sunset or the sunrise are my stained glass windows. The warm ground beneath me is my wooden bench that I sit on. I feel so free sitting out in my church.

This is where I talk with my Creator. Sometimes it is in a smudging ceremony, where the scented smoke of the smudging bowl goes up to the sky to offer my prayers. Or there are times when I talk openly to my Creator. My words echo in the openness of the woods. I don't feel alone as I sit on the ground or on the rock, or as I like to refer to it, my pew. Instead I feel a closeness with the elements around me. My words, my prayers are connecting with what I feel around me. A oneness with the nature around me.

There are times I don't talk at all. I sit there and enjoy the scenery. I bask in the beauty of the dimming colour of the flowers in the fields or enjoy the sound of the songbirds. Overnight it seems the world has burst into colour or song as the season comes to a close. The fading colors of the trees show the Creator at work within my church.

The sermon is before me if only I listen closely and open my heart to what my church is telling me. The season of life is ending, but listen to how the birds sing in the trees or how the trees display their finest foliage in the coming cold weather. Nature does not fear the end of the season, but rather celebrates in it.

As I sit there in my church, alone with my thoughts, the sermon goes on before me. One only has to listen and be still for the message to be heard. Sometimes I come to my church to be comforted and to seek answers. There

My words echo
in the openness
of the woods.
I don't feel alone
as I sit on the ground
or on the rock,
or as I like to refer
to it, my pew.

are moments in my life when the rain mingled with the tears on my face. I had lost a loved one and sought answers in my church. No real answers as to why death came to the ones I loved, but I was comforted. Maybe that was what I needed at that time.

I feel free within my church. Free to express my beliefs and my faith. My church is alive. As I sit amongst the trees and the rocks, I know who I am. I have a sense of true belonging. Faith is knowing the trees are going to lose their colourful foliage, but a season will come again where they will bloom in their green finery. The birds will come back and the circle of life resumes. Each season has its own sermon to teach me.

Yes, my church is different from the conventional one with bricks and mortar, but it still a place I talk to my Creator. A place where I go to worship and pray. ✚

Vivian Ketchum is Anishinabe of Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation, outside of Kenora, Ont. She lives in Winnipeg.



PWS&D Developments

The quarterly newsletter for Presbyterian World Service & Development • 2016 Edition, Issue 2

ABRIDGED
VERSION



Finding Home

NO ONE IS A REFUGEE BY CHOICE. Refugees and internally displaced people are forced to flee their homes out of fear for their lives and liberty. Many live in crowded camps, waiting for peace and an opportunity to return home. Some can return after a few weeks while others spend their entire lifetime hoping for the chance to rebuild their lives with dignity.

“Our home used to be paradise”

With the devastating surge in the number of refugees around the world, more and more are searching for home. After five years of brutal violence in Syria, millions of fearful residents have fled. Nisreen and her husband Ahmad are two such people.

Nisreen and Ahmad remember that “our home used to be paradise” before the conflict.

At their former home, they would host large barbecues for family and friends. Their children laughed and played in the garden

courtyard. Now they live in a one-room apartment in Lebanon—that they share with 10 other family members—where they fled for safety after violence in their town escalated.

Their cherished home and the life they knew have been torn apart by war.

It has not been easy adjusting to their new life in Lebanon. Instead of a garden courtyard, the children play inside on a stack of thin mattresses. They no longer have a barbecue to cook meals, but a small stove with one working burner.

Everything that Ahmad earns goes toward rent, leaving the couple worried about buying food and clothes for their children.

A Sense of Home

In response, Presbyterian World Service & Development, with our partners at Canadian Foodgrains Bank, are helping families like Nisreen’s who have fled their homes. Food vouchers, distributed by local partners, allow families to shop for groceries at local stores ►



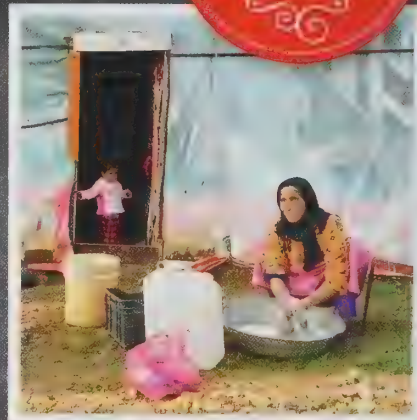


Who is a Refugee?

International law defines refugees as people who are unable or unwilling to return to their countries because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or because they belong to a particular social group. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports there are 59.5 million refugees and displaced people around the world.



Learn more
about our refugee
sponsorship program:
[WeRespond.ca/
refugee-sponsorship](http://WeRespond.ca/refugee-sponsorship)



and prepare home-cooked meals—preserving dignity and creating a sense of home.

While this isn't the paradise they remember, in the shelter of their apartment—over meals of rice and lentils purchased with the vouchers—Nisreen, Ahmad and their children have found safety and a place to call home.

In 2015, generous support from Presbyterian congregations and individuals allowed PWS&D to respond to those who fled or have been displaced due to violent conflict through our partners at Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) and ACT Alliance.

- Over 11,000 people displaced by violent conflict and suffering food shortages in South Sudan received vouchers that allowed them to buy food (CFGB)
- In refugee camps, essential non-food items—including water, hygiene supplies,

shelter and clothing—as well as medical, educational and psychosocial support are being provided to Syrian refugees (ACT)

- Using a voucher system, 11,000 refugees in Lebanon are able to use local markets and make their own food choices—increasing access to food and providing a sense of dignity and normalcy (CFGB)
- Food assistance is preserving the health and food security of 6,000 families who have been internally displaced within Syria (CFGB)
- In Iraq, PWS&D contributed to a response helping families access food and water, as well as health and hygiene kits to improve sanitation (ACT)

actalliance

**Canadian
Foodgrains
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A Christian Response
to Hunger

PLEASE RESPOND

with us to the ongoing plight of those who have been forced to flee their homes and find shelter elsewhere.

For only \$300, PWS&D is able to provide food vouchers for a family in Lebanon for one year. Through matching funds from the Canadian government at Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a gift of \$60 is matched at a rate of 4:1, allowing for one year of support. Your gifts to PWS&D's Syria response will assist even more families in 2016.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is an official sponsorship agreement holder with the Government of Canada. Through PWS&D, Presbyterian congregations can sponsor refugees and support them as they build safe and dignified lives in Canada.

Life

Thoughts and inspiration for your daily life

REFLECTION

Called to the Church

Stories of faith and life.

THERE ARE MANY lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members and worshippers in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. That's one thing these four stories have in common. Despite feeling ostracized, despite feeling they are hated by God, despite feeling alone in both their sexuality and their faith, the primary thing these four people have in common is their desire to serve God through the church. They would all like the Presbyterian Church in Canada to change its stance on their sexuality; but that's not why they joined the church in the beginning. They joined our denomination because it is family to them. >

Aubrey Hawton

I WAS RAISED in the Brethren in Christ Church in central Ontario. Michael, my husband, was raised in the Anglican Church in Windsor, Ont. Both of us were active in congregational and denominational activities, ranging from singing in the choir, to serving as altar boys, to sitting on denominational and international committees.

As I grew through my teen years, I began to sense that I was different from most of my school and church buddies, who were interested in girls. For me, there was absolutely no interest; the boys caught my eye a bit more! However, the try-to-be-good Christian in me knew that being gay was not an option, based on the teaching that I had heard at church. It hadn't been drummed into me, but it certainly was clear: good Christian boys dated good Christian girls, got married and had kids—and it had better happen in that order, too!

So, I dated throughout high school and into my university years, but I was never happy in any of the relationships. I was playing the game that was expected of me, and trying to keep people happy.

In 1980, while working in a treatment home for emotionally disturbed youth, I happened to notice a rather handsome young man who worked in the home beside mine. After a few days, I finally overcame my fear (and stupidity!) and spoke to him about non-work stuff. By the end of the conversation, I had actually asked him out on a date. And the rest, as they say, is history.


But that history has been fraught with hills and valleys, most of which a straight couple within the church would not have had to endure.

Our application for membership in our church was approved by session,

but it was not without dissent. We are forever thankful to the elders who supported us in our quest for a spiritual home, despite our gayness.

The next obstacle in our way was the baptism of our eldest son. For others who were members in good standing of a Presbyterian congregation, I'm not sure that the issue would have arisen. But for us, it became another obstacle. Fortunately, the battle was shorter than the membership one, and we were able to celebrate our son's baptism at our island cottage, with about 125 family members and friends present for the sacrament and an afternoon of celebrating both the baptism and the joys of cottage life.

Almost 12 years to the day after our first worship service at St. Andrew's, Coldwater, Ont., Michael and I were united in holy matrimony. We weren't able to do this in our home congregation with our minister officiating. With our three children present we formalized our 35-year love for, and relationship with, each other, by exchanging rings and becoming one. The tears that were shed were a combination of tears of joy for our commitment to, and love of, each other; as well as tears of sadness, that our denomination did not see us as worthy of being married.

In the weeks following our wedding, we were able to share the good news with our St. Andrew's family. We were not, however, permitted by the denomination's policy to have our marriage blessed by a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. So again, we wait ... 

Aubrey Hawton is an elder at St. Andrew's, Coldwater, Ont.



Almost 12 years to the day after our first worship service at St. Andrew's, Coldwater, Ont., Michael and I were united in holy matrimony. We weren't able to do this in our home congregation with our minister officiating.

Bill Elliott

I HAVE BEEN KEENLY AWARE of my strong homosexual orientation since adolescence. For many years I struggled to suppress it, fearing hostile reactions if it became known, and trying to conform to the heterosexual norm that seemed to be the only acceptable way of being in my world. The loneliness and despair I often felt were a burden I feared I might never be free of.

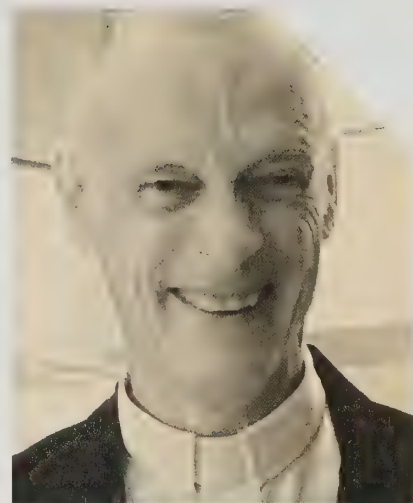
Finally in 1998, in the midst of all the challenges of transition my wife Marie and I were dealing with as we returned from several years of serving the church in Mauritius, I faced my reality. Throughout our nearly 13 years of marriage Marie and I had been living quietly and painfully with the awareness and the effects of my orientation, and we finally agreed that it would be better to separate, with a commitment to remain friends, so that both of us could seek healthier and more fulfilling lives.

We told our family and friends of our decision, sharing the specific reason with those we felt could understand

and support us. My parents and siblings, at first unsettled by this revelation, moved with time to full acceptance of our situation. Most of them understand such acceptance as a matter of Christian principle.

I came out to family and friends just as I was receiving the call to be the minister of Glebe, Toronto. While I knew the Presbyterian Church's official stance on the gay issue—and specifically on gay ministers—was disapproving, I determined not to be frightened or bullied out of my vocation. In one way or another, I had served the church all my life, and coming to terms with my gayness did not negate any of that or make me unfit to continue to serve.

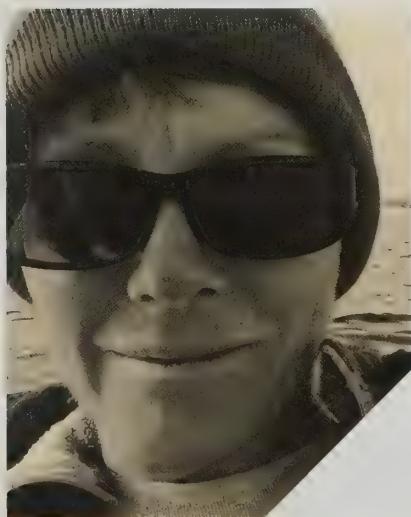
Since coming out to the extent that it felt safe in the church, I have developed a committed relationship with my partner David, and we now live together in Toronto. He and Marie are on friendly terms with each other and are both fully accepted as part of my family. Not only I, but Marie, David and my whole family



have had to deal with the consequences of me growing up closeted in a church and a broader community that provided practically no vision, affirmation or guidance for living a valued and healthy life as a gay person. In the midst of this challenging and hostile environment, faith has been vital in helping me and my loved ones to find our way out of the closet of ignorance, shame and fear, and to act responsibly and lovingly towards one another and within the church. +

Rev. Bill Elliott is now retired. He came out at the 2015 General Assembly.

Laura Laird



I AM AN OPENLY GAY WOMAN attending First, Penetanguishene, Ont. The congregation has welcomed me with open arms since I joined in August 2014. This still surprises me.

I grew up confident in the knowledge that God hated me. After the new covenant was declared, after the sheet full of unclean animals was lowered down to Peter and declared clean, after

grace is declared for everyone else, only then does Paul write his vitriol of Romans 1. An exemption, and exclusion, is declared for homosexuals. We are not welcome in the new covenant.

God's hatred was made clear to me on the faces of his people. In my 20s I attended church with my partner Sara. We were treated as lepers. We were not demonstrative. >

REFLECTION, continued


We were not open about our relationship but people knew. People in that church would not even address me by my name. To this day, people in that church will not let me on their property because I am gay. I left the church. I searched for reasons to not believe in God and found many. My faith died.

In 2014, under the duress of another failed relationship, I came back to the church. I was alone and desperate and had no one to whom I could turn. My first Sunday at

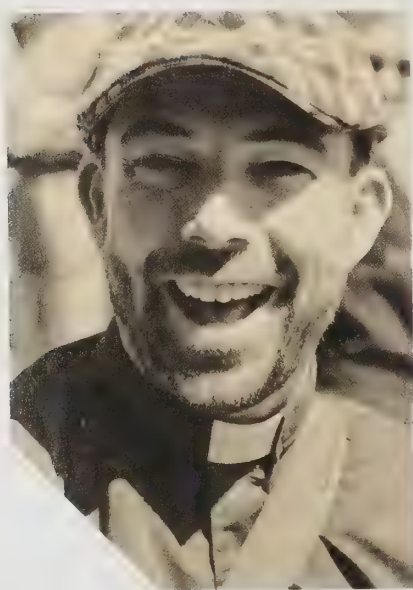
First Presbyterian, Rev. Mark Wolfe preached powerfully about the crumbs that fall from the table that the dogs are allowed to eat. (Matthew 15) It seemed a bit of a welcome. The music was the music of my childhood. The people have become Christ to me. Their ongoing fellowship is the Shekinah.

I am not ruthless. I am not arrogant. I am not full of envy, strife, murder, deceit and malice. I am not these things—at least no more than anyone else. Paul tells me that this is my very

nature. I don't agree. I try to live with patience, kindness, love, joy and hope.

Neural pathways formed in childhood are not going to change just because someone struck a committee. Are gays allowed to have a full life? Or shall we be allowed in only if we sit in the back pew and agree not to breed? How many more children of the church will be driven into the wilderness? 

Laura Laird worships at First, Penetanguishene, Ont.



Mark Chiang

I GREW UP IN ONTARIO, in a family on the conservative evangelical side of Christianity. To my family, there was nothing more evil, more beyond the power of God's love, than being gay. As my dad would write in the PCC chat rooms, gay was a choice you made after rejecting God and abandoning yourself to hedonistic lust. In my Christian high school, I would hear rumours of graduating students who escaped our small community to embrace the 'homosexual lifestyle.' I imagined them in the dungeons of Toronto, lost in a haze of opium smoke and kept warm by burning Bibles. I was determined not to become one of them.

If being gay was the consequence of abandoning God, my first recourse was to stick to God more fervently. I prayed hard and read my Bible. I helped start a prayer group for Christians who felt our fellow students weren't Christian enough. While others prayed for easy exams or the O.J. Simpson trial,

I prayed silently to be cured of gayness. But no matter how hard I prayed, my feelings never changed. I could only conclude that, despite my efforts, my faith wasn't good enough for God.

By this point, I had been working as a church organist for several years and I felt a curious call to stand behind the pulpit. But becoming a minister terrified me. Yet if God was calling me to ministry, there was no choice but to obey. I went to seminary full of anger and resentment—obeying God, but not loving God.

As part of a student conference, I was scheduled to attend an LGBTQ worship service. This was, as far as I knew, the first time I would be in a room with openly gay or lesbian people—gay people who claimed to be Christian. I was nervous, and terribly skeptical. I don't remember how I got to the church, I don't remember who was with me, I don't remember what they said—but I do remember the

Lord's Prayer. It was one of the most powerful spiritual experiences I ever had. Over a hundred gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people raised their voices in the loudest, most Spirit-filled rendition I had ever heard. By the time they crescendoed to "For Thine is the kingdom," I could barely hold back the tears. In my mind came the words of Peter as he defended the inclusion of Gentiles: "God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us." (Acts 15:8)

When I look back at the life I had as a closeted gay man, I see an

abundance of anger, bitterness, self-hatred, self-righteousness and fear. I obeyed God, but I was far from godly. In comparison to that, I am a new person today. When I accepted that God loved me just as God made me, I was born again—and yes, the irony of it makes me laugh too. +

Rev. Mark Chiang is minister at St. Andrew's, Edmonton. He blogs at onequeerpresby.wordpress.com.

All four of these stories have been heavily edited. The full versions can be found at presbyterianrecord.ca

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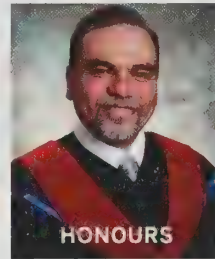
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Vaughan Community,
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Matthew Lingard
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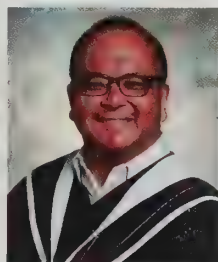


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Central, Hamilton, Ont.

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Kiersty Hong
Blythwood Road Baptist
Church, Toronto

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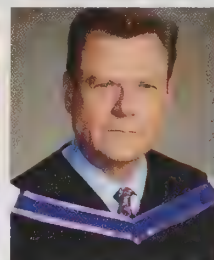
Teresa Ruth McWhirter
*St. Paul's,
Thornbury, Ont.*



Mary Eluned Hughes
*St. Andrew's,
Stittsville, Ont.*



David Thomas Sturtevant
*St. Andrew's,
Kitchener, Ont.*



Ain Victor Vaus
Knox, Burlington, Ont.

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MASTER OF DIVINITY AS A FIRST DEGREE



Michael Dukefe
*United Pentecostal Church,
Saint-Laurent, Que.*

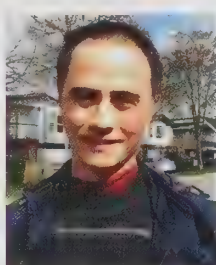
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INTERVIEW

Complicated and Uncertain Times

A conversation with Ian Ross-McDonald, general secretary
of the Life and Mission Agency.

interview by **ANDREW FAIZ**

AT THE 2015 GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN VANCOUVER, Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, accepting the position of general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, spoke of courage.

"One of the stories that gives me hope is the story of Jesus and the disciples in the storm-tossed boat. Buffeted by the winds and waves, and rolling about on the threatening but life-giving waters, the boat-church is filled with disciples, and always on board is the life-nurturing, hope-giving presence of Christ. ... Jesus does not say to the disciples, 'Fear not,' but ... 'Have courage.'

"And it is courage that the church so desperately needs. Courage along with the composite elements of wisdom, honesty, faith, grace, hope, endurance, truth—all these things to be nurtured in our congregations, church courts and personal relationships, in the colleges and the agencies of the church."

I met Ross-McDonald later in the year at his office. I began our conversation by reminding him of his speech.

FAIZ: I love this line of yours: "God has called us to live in complicated and uncertain times."

ROSS-MCDONALD: There is a significant amount of narcissism that we all revel in. We cling to the idea that the success, whatever that means, of the church all lies within our hands or programs or structures. Part of our reality is that, "This is the nature of the time we live in." They've been given to us as much as we've created them or can fully control them. I should say, of course, that we did things in the past that have contributed to the situation we are in. But I'm also saying not everything is in our hands. We've been called into this; these are the times we have been delivered to.

FAIZ: It strikes me that it all comes down to money and numbers, our definition of success.

ROSS-MCDONALD: There is a great line in one of the liturgies: "We are always looking for more success than you ever had." The 'you' being Jesus. We just had a nice boom in the '40s to '60s. Even if we look to history, there were not hordes of people in the churches all the time. Church attendance in Halifax during the Victorian period was a low percentage of the population. If we think of ourselves as being called into these complicated times then we can begin to respond with complex, nuanced and carefully thought out answers. We need some more sitting and thinking rather than reacting; more thoughtful

reflection than satisfaction with simple answers that do not ultimately satisfy.

FAIZ: Your office is seen as the place from which decisions are made and things are done; that in a storm, your office will steady us.

ROSS-MCDONALD: I think there is a little bit of work to be done in the positioning of the minds of the church [when it comes to] what the national denomination's offices and employees are for and what they do.

There are things that cannot be done locally. There are big picture things that need to be done, administratively, and big vision things carried out related to the articulated vision of the church. Those are things that properly and most efficiently and effectively are done nationally.

But national denominational staff, offices and structures cannot do many of those essential things that happen when we gather in a neighbourhood on a Sunday. We can support that work, but we cannot essentially do it.

People's experience of church is not 50 Wynford Drive [the denomination's national offices in Toronto], it's not universally positive for a variety of reasons. Sometimes we have failed. Sometimes it has not been possible or not appropriate for us to do some things. Sometimes we have not had the resources. Sometimes the church has given us specific tasks to carry out. And to some extent we occupy a fantasy spot in the life of the church; we have all said if only people at 50 Wynford Drive would do this or that things would be better. I don't think there are any quick or easy fixes.

FAIZ: Anxiety, trauma, leadership—what do they mean?

ROSS-MCDONALD: In our system, leadership is broad not high; there are things all of us are to do as leaders in these anxious and uncertain times.

Yes, there is the trauma that comes from the loss we feel and one of its expressions is anxiety. And the anxiety lessens us and makes us something other than we are called to be. Other expressions of the trauma are passivity, lack of trust, and also hostility, I think. In addition to vision, these are some of the things that need to be courageously analyzed.

Leadership is another important matter. If you're in a boat in a storm, you wouldn't say, "All we need is simply a better mast." To deal with the storm, we need all the parts of the ship and the people in it to be strong and work together. To me, leadership is a constellation of things, it's not a

technique, it's not a list of 10 steps to success. Leadership is more about the cultivation of insight, knowledge, carefulness, courage, faith, hope, grace, endurance—not a single program or quick fix.

FAIZ: We all want change but not that change.

ROSS-MCDONALD: Yeah. But what change do we all want? We want it to change from what it is, but to what? To something new? To something more familiar? It's a complicated conversation.

We haven't agreed on what change looks like. Every congregation says, we're engaged in intentional renewal, and sometimes that means being without a building, or going to a new structure, or finding new configurations of leadership, or making everything different in worship; for others it is as simple as a new sign. Renewal looks different to everyone and nobody can agree on what renewal is and it cannot be the same thing in every context.

FAIZ: I sense we're all struggling with how to have this conversation. We are so overwhelmed by our anxieties. I think a lot of people looked at the Haynes Report [printed in part in the June 2013 issue of the *Record*] as an expression of those anxieties.

ROSS-MCDONALD: The Haynes' Report was a study of the PCC and how the Life and Mission Agency and the church might respond to a forecast for the future. And if you look at the recommendations there are things that might be done locally or at the presbytery level, potential changes needed in our polity and our structures. There are things for the church to think about, not just one agency. When people say, 'They didn't implement the Haynes Report,' well, this office can't do all of the things suggested by the report. Some of the choices are to be made by people and bodies elsewhere as they think about how best and faithfully to organize things. I find myself invoking the Life and Missions Project Committee Report. People can elect to use its suggestions or not and every generation needs to go back and look at it again.

FAIZ: I understand, but it goes back to the mode of communication, on how things are heard. I would never accuse LMA or 50 Wynford of being great communicators to the rest of the church. The Haynes

Report is on one level an amalgamation of 50 years of similar reports. There is a line early on in the report, "We watched this happening to us ..." So, communication, anxiety, leadership.

ROSS-MCDONALD: Yes, that is true. We have not always communicated well with each other. And there have been many lost opportunities. And we remember that the church through General Assembly, committees, agency committees, etc., work together to discern what best to do at any time. The church is often perceived as balanced on a few shoulders but there is more freedom and opportunity for many to make a difference than we sometimes remember or exercise.

FAIZ: How do you see your job?

ROSS-MCDONALD: It has a facilitating role to some extent; it needs to facilitate actions among the moving parts of the church. It is to see and communicate the various movements in our denomination. It's about conveying information, picking up things happening in one place and being able to use that information to influence something else in another place. There are the mundane tasks and legal issues. But also setting the course with the Life and Mission Agency, working through what we're going to focus on or how we're going to respond to things. I think it's about identifying some emphases, how do we do all this stuff together, and thinking about how we all work together.

FAIZ: What is the tone you'd like to set?

ROSS-MCDONALD: The anxiety and the fear can make us a little sharp with one another. Maybe we all need to be a little more patient and gracious, a little more realistic about what can and can't be done. We can all try to be a little more open.

One thing we need to talk about is trust. There is not a lot of trust in the system: not just between the denomination's offices and the church across the country. But even within presbyteries, there isn't much trust anymore in some places. Can you trust the clerk to do the job? Do you trust your colleagues? Do congregations trust their ministers? We need to talk about trust within the church but at the end of the day we have to also ask if our faith is in the church or in Christ?

FAIZ: Isn't that how the whole church is structured? Christendom—God would come to us through church.



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Feature

INTERVIEW, continued

ROSS-MCDONALD: The church is not the kingdom. The church is one of the tools that could and should help be the means by which the reign of God is established. But how did we in our Christian education leave behind the mistaken idea that the Kingdom of Heaven referred only to heaven or mistake the Kingdom of God for the church?

Those things are hard to mix up after reading scripture but we did it pretty easily.

What is the church for or not for? That's a good question and if we asked that question things might be a little different. Are congregations there for the sake of the congregations or are they there for the sake of the world and for the facilitation of nurturing faith and education for discipleship? Are congregations there only as congregations? Or do they have a role beyond themselves?

FAIZ: I think it's a great question. The older I get as a churchgoer and member, the more I realize I have to learn to unlearn stuff, my very basic ideas of church and ministry. See Christ with more clarity.

ROSS-MCDONALD: I think there is a sense that we might be owed something by the church, perhaps because we have mistaken it for Christ or the object of faith. Somebody said to me recently, invoking that John F. Kennedy speech, 'Ask not what the church can do for you, but what you can do for the kingdom.' They felt embarrassed by how juvenile and optimistic that sounded but I think there might be something there.

Again, we need courage to face up to the truth of the church, warts and all. So the church has racism in it? Why is that a threat to say the truth about the church acting in ways it ought not to have? Why are we shocked? Why is that threatening? Yes, we've messed it up in huge and disturbing ways and that has left behind, in some places, tragic legacies that will outlive us. The course of history is long and we are bound to get it wrong before getting it right.

FAIZ: Now it is our job to fix it all.

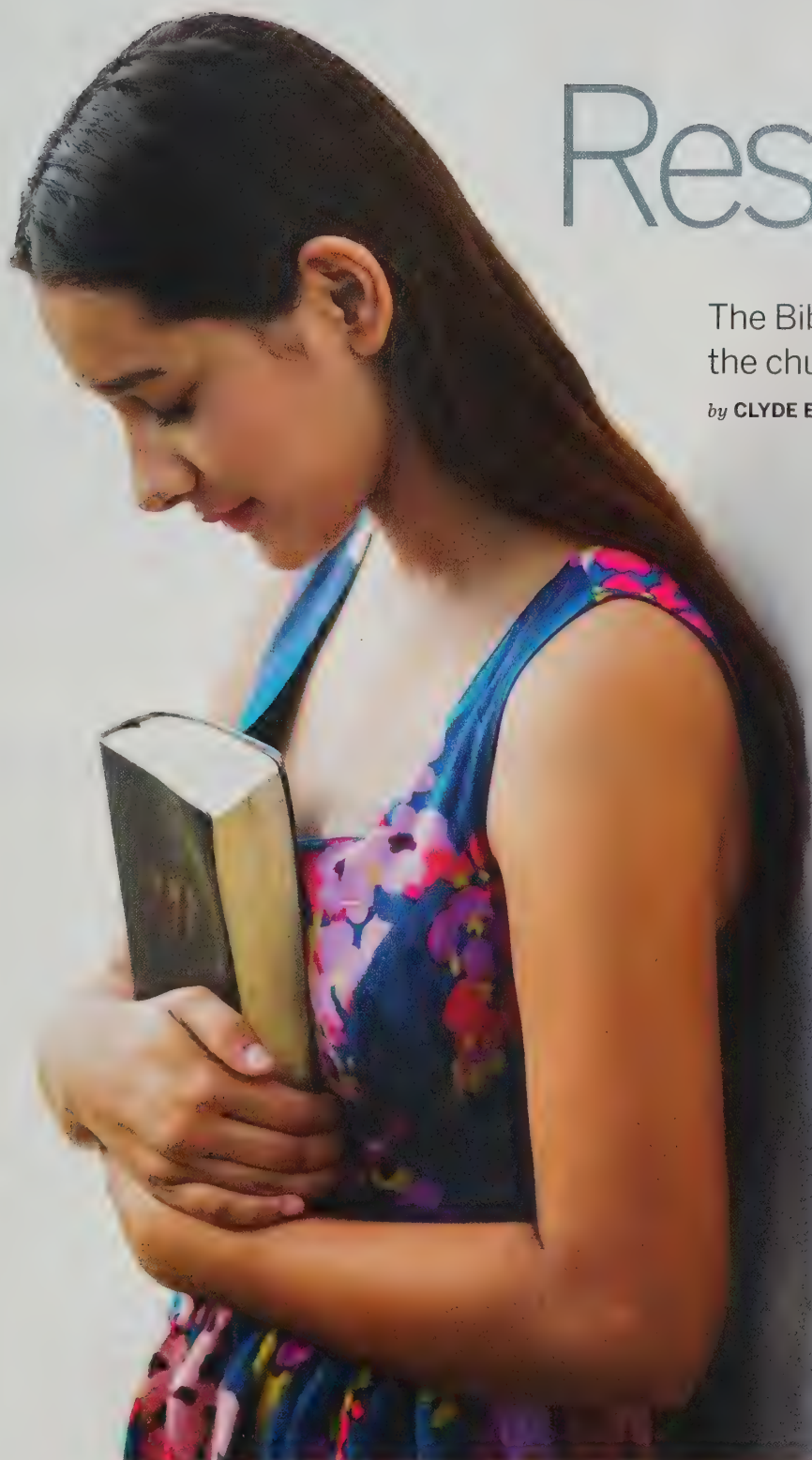
ROSS-MCDONALD: I don't know about fixing. It belongs to all of us to address the times. In part, my job is to name some of the issues that bind us and to name the issues that challenge us, to be part of a diverse conversation, to make sure we take into account a broad and large view of things. And to listen to what is being said and then, I suppose, to carry out resolutions decided upon by the church in the best way that we can and also to make some difficult and even unpopular decisions at times based on what I see and come to know. +

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

Respect

The Bible sets the tone for
the church's conversations.

by **CLYDE ERVINE**



Respect

IS ABOUT HOW WE EVALUATE AND TREAT OTHERS. It's not so much about civility or good manners, but about attitudes and behaviours rooted in how God treats us that should shape how we treat others.

Respect has long been thought a good thing. In naming it the preeminent value, Aristotle argued that respect lay in moral worth rather than military might. Yet enlightened as that may seem, it didn't occur to him to include slaves as those to whom respect was due. Respect long retained an elitist air as something merited by the few, or something due to the powerful. That view was challenged by 18th-century philosopher Immanuel Kant, who proposed that respect is owed to "every rational human being." Kant said all people should be respected irrespective of moral worth, for each "and every reasonable agent exists as an end in himself." Kant, a Lutheran, linked respect to the Bible's command to love our neighbour.

Nowadays, respect is taken as foundational in a democratic society; yet it remains elusive. Respect is complicated. Derived from the Latin word *respicere*, its literal meaning is to look back at or to look again. To respect is to pay attention to or consider something, regardless of moral merit. To respect something doesn't mean that we necessarily approve of what claims our attention; the opposite of respect isn't disapproval, but contempt.

Church history is replete with people both giving and gaining respect; yet the church's failure to practice respect has been spectacular at times. Rooted in Palestinian

obscurity and suspect for centuries within the Roman Empire, which so often persecuted it, the church gained official status in the Empire following the conversion of Emperor Constantine in 312 AD. Thereafter protected, the church, now in the position to give respect to others, refused to grant it to others, not least Jews. As for Muslims at the edge of the Empire, I need only mention the word 'Crusades.' At least in the West, the church has more often than not found it hard to enjoy power and practice respect at the same time.

The history of church disrespect toward LGBT folk is well documented. Though few expect the church to endorse all sexual relationships, the church has had a heightened contempt for gay people, even though we turn blind eyes to violence, oppression of the poor, sins of speech, as well as various types of heterosexual sin, all of which the Bible condemns.

The Bible tells us to respect or honour God, parents and leaders; that was uncontroversial in the biblical world. But something subversive shows up in the Bible to challenge the rules then in place as to whom respect was to be given. Recall how Jesus broke conventional rules about whom to include or exclude from meal-tables. He shared table-talk with tax-collectors and prostitutes, both of whom flagrantly defied the Commandments, listening to those whom others despised, including women and children whom others silenced. There's not a word in the gospels that leads me to believe that Jesus would



withhold respect from LGBT folk.

Respect was a key issue for the Apostle Paul. In 1 Corinthians he accuses the church in Corinth of treating some of its members with contempt: "As a church, I hear that there are divisions among you ... when the time comes to eat, each ... goes ahead with your own supper ... one goes hungry and another becomes drunk ... do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?"

Paul critiques what happens within Corinth's house

churches. As socially prominent members celebrate the Lord's Supper in the dining room, poor members, many of them no doubt slaves, stand hungry in a hallway. Paul calls it contempt, insisting that every church member is worthy of respect: "Those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect." (1 Corinthians 12:23)

So radical is the Bible when it comes to respect that all, made in the image of God, no matter who we are or what >

The Bible says that whether we're straight or gay, we reflect God's image, even if, in all of us, the image is distorted. Each of us is precious, none more so than those who are disrespected and discriminated against because of their minority sexual identity.

we've done, are seen to deserve it. LGBT church members don't always receive it. Respect must be the tone of our church's debate on same-sex issues.

But what's the debate about? It's not about whether LGBT people deserve respect; that's not up for debate; nor are we debating whether or not the church should welcome those with a minority sexual identity; Jesus welcomed all; nor are we debating civil rights for LGBT people or the legality of same-sex marriage. Our debate is specific: whether the view of the Presbyterian Church in Canada that sexual intercourse outside of heterosexual marriage, specifically homosexual intercourse, is or is not a departure from God's design for human sexuality. Our 1994 General Assembly endorsed the view that it is a departure when it adopted the church doctrine committee's Report on Human Sexuality. Some want to revisit and revise this view, believing that the Bible can be read in ways that allow LGBT Christians to commit themselves in same-sex monogamous marriage, or marriage-like unions. Though angry militants exist at either end of the spectrum, I think it's possible to debate the issue with respect.

To do that, I want to try to build some common ground

by offering the following proposals, some of them stolen from John Stott's book, *Involvement: Social and Sexual Relationships in the Modern World*.

1. WE'RE ALL HUMAN BEINGS. Obviously! But let's make it concrete. The 'masculine' lesbian neighbour, whom you keep at arm's length, is a human being; the flamboyantly gay waiter at your local Starbucks, whose antics irk you, is a human being. The Bible says that whether we're straight or gay, we reflect God's image, even if, in all of us, the image is distorted. Each of us is precious, none more so than those who are disrespected and discriminated against because of their minority sexual identity.

2. WE'RE ALL SEXUAL HUMAN BEINGS AND NEED TO BE TREATED WITH GREAT SENSITIVITY. Yet our debate is often insensitive; some use the Bible to justify calling gay people names; some call those who believe that the Bible forbids same-sex unions 'bigots.' We need to do what Jesus did: listen, not least to those with whom we disagree. Our debate isn't an abstract one; it's about the lives of family, friends, and fellow congregants; so we ought to talk with sensitive respect. As W. B. Yeats once wrote:

"I have spread my dreams under your feet; tread softly because you tread on my dreams."

3. WE'RE ALL SINFUL, SEXUAL HUMAN BEINGS. That may shock you, but it's what our church teaches. *Living Faith* says: "Sin is a power present in every human life, even at birth. It issues in such sins as pride asserting itself against God, indifference towards God and neighbour, untruthfulness, greed, lust, laziness, gluttony, envy, and selfish anger."

Living Faith refers to the maligned doctrine of total depravity, whose point isn't that we're totally evil, but that every part of us, including our sexuality, is affected by sin. It means that none of us, straight or gay, is sexually pure. So, to paraphrase Jesus, heterosexuals should take the beam from their own eyes before tackling the speck in a homosexual's eyes.

4. WE'RE BIBLICALLY-FOCUSED CHRISTIANS. The debate is between affirming and non-affirming Christians. So, to engage in it with respect, we charitably assume that those who affirm the legitimacy of gay sex in certain circumstances do so not because they're licentious, but because they're persuaded by their reading of the Bible that such can be legitimate. And we assume that those who do not affirm gay sex as a Christian option do so not from bigotry but because they're persuaded of that view by their reading of the Bible.

For example, the overture sent by the Presbytery of East Toronto to the 2015 General Assembly asks for the inclusion in the church of those in "committed, faithful relationships with people of the same sex." That is, monogamous same-sex unions or marriages, not casual sex!

5. WE'RE ALL CALLED TO SEXUAL DISCIPLINE. Most of us believe that the Bible demands sexual discipline and self-control, and that whether we're traditionalist or revisionist, self-control implies saying no to some of our sexual desires. Traditionalists and revisionists may disagree as to where the line lies, but we agree that there is one. Indeed most revisionists desire a similar discipline for homosexual Christians as traditionalists do for heterosexual ones.

It's important to all of us that the church, in a society that recognizes few sexual boundaries, continues to do so. In Colossians 3:5 Paul writes: "Put to death ... whatever

in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire." Paul is eager that the church witness to the world Jesus' plan to rid it of sin and establish his kingdom. To that end, Jesus calls his church to embody that coming kingdom by living out its values, not least a sexual ethic that challenges and contradicts the world. For Paul, the sexual integrity of the church is a missional responsibility; that's why we're all called to sexual discipline.

6. SEXUALITY IS TO A DEGREE A MYSTERY THAT WE DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND. After years of research, scholars still ponder homosexuality's origins. Are they genetic or is sexuality to some extent shaped by environment? And what about the possibility of changing sexual orientation? Though most agree that sexual orientation can be plotted along a spectrum, exclusively homosexual at one end and heterosexual at the other, few now advocate for the possibility of fundamentally changing sexual identity. What does seem clear is that most who identify as gay experience their identity not as something they chose but as something with which they were born. We're dealing with mystery here, so let's talk with respect.

7. WE ALL NEED LOVE AND ARE CAPABLE OF LOVING. Humans were made to love and need each other. Though the setting for the Genesis phrase, "It is not good that man should be alone," is the one-flesh union of Adam and Eve, its meaning applies more broadly. That is: we all crave intimacy; we all need to know another and be known by another. Some of this comes from family and some from friendship, whether opposite-sex friends or same-sex friends. The Bible's most famous example of a profound same-sex friendship is the love of David and Jonathan. Whatever we end up saying about the legitimacy of gay sex for Christians, we ought not deny the need each one of us has for love, nor diminish the rich capacity for love that gay couples and gay friends frequently exhibit.

8. WE'RE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK! That is, we treat the Bible with great respect. *Living Faith* sums it up in the words: "The Bible has been given to us by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life. It is the standard of all doctrine by which we must test any word that comes to us from church, world, or inner experience."

Though some liberal Christians say that God has ➤

no more interest in same-sex issues than in whether we're right-handed or left-handed, such a claim disrespects the Bible. At our best, Presbyterians take the Bible seriously, seeking to hear and obey its word. But on opening the Bible to see what it says about same-sex issues, we find a handful of texts that seem to repudiate all homosexual activity. For some traditionalists, that ends the conversation. It's more respectful and responsible, however, to take the time to review the Bible's negative references to homosexuality and consider if and how they apply to us today.

9. A FINAL PROPOSAL: ALL BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IS FALLIBLE AND MUST BE OPEN TO REFORM. Traditionalists may misread the Bible if homophobic prejudice causes them to dismiss new ways of reading. Revisionists who want to offer LGBT people something more positive than "no," or who feel that the church in saying "no" will find itself on the wrong side of history, may read into the Bible the conclusions they want to find. We need to read the Bible with care; in particular, gay and straight Christians need to read it together.

Respect

IS HARD WORK; it takes time, patience and humility to pay attention to, and to thoughtfully debate those with whose views we may disagree. Because respect is hard work, it's tempting to take short cuts. That shows up in our current debate.

Some of those who argue for a traditional stance are tempted to take two particular shortcuts. One is to downplay or disregard the trouble, and sometimes the tragedy, that often accompanies the lives of LGBT people. Keen to quickly solve this contentious issue, they will not take the time nor spend the emotional energy to listen to the stories that LGBT people have to tell. Another tempting shortcut for traditionalists is to reach for the Bible and simply declare, "The Bible says," downplaying and disregarding the significant distance that lies between ancient inspired texts and our 21st-century lives. On both counts, disrespect is the result, and debate among us flounders.

But some who call for our church's view on same-sex issues to be revised are also tempted by shortcuts. One of them is to use words with great emotional power, but with imprecision. One such is the word 'inclusion.' The "Open Letter to the Presbyterian Church in Canada" found on the Presbyterians for Inclusion website is in many ways a fine letter, for it is beyond question that Jesus had a special concern for marginalized people, offering hospitality and inclusion where others offered contempt. Yet the open letter's use of the word 'inclusion' invites comment.

Inclusion is a word that our society places high in its pantheon of virtues. And because the word carries such rhetorical power, it's tempting to use it in the church as a trump card that promises to give its promoters the moral high ground, and send those who in any way qualify inclusivity to political purgatory. Such a move, even if unintentional, can be a shortcut that closes down debate. Given the contentious issue at the core of our church's current debate, the word 'inclusion,' used so broadly in the open letter, cries out for greater precision and theological reflection.

As I said earlier, Jesus included those whom others treated with contempt. Inclusion is a good thing. But we need to analyze this tricky word. In his Letter to the Romans, for instance, Paul says that we're all sinners, without exception: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Now I'd call that inclusive, though I'm not sure it's the sort of inclusivity our society has in mind when it uses the word 'inclusion.' Paul then goes on to say in Romans 5 that "while we were sinners Christ died for us," a most inclusive solution for our sin.

I suggest that the cross is actually the most inclusive place in history. What can beat John 3:16? Yet with respect, the cross is also the most exclusive place in history, for it's there, and nowhere else, says the New Testament, that God's Son took away the sin of the world. The author of Hebrews 7, comparing Christ to the high priests of the old covenant, writes: "Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself."


So, the New Testament, inclusive in some ways, is exclusive in others, not least in its succinct baptismal confession, "Jesus is Lord." In light of that, our church's *Book of Common Worship* calls those becoming church members

to affirm an exclusive commitment to him: “Do you turn away from sin, renounce evil and all powers in the world that rebel against God?”

Or take the story in John 8 of how Jesus intervened to protect a woman “caught in the ... act of adultery.” He treats her with great respect, and says to her, “neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.” It’s a story that includes a sinner but excludes her sin. This pattern continues right to the Bible’s final page, when people from all nations are envisaged as entering God’s kingdom—inclusivity. Yet, “nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood”—exclusivity. (Revelation 21:26-27)

As the witty Episcopalian priest Fleming Rutledge

says, the “the inclusivity of religion always fails ... because, eventually, somebody has got to say ‘no’ somewhere to somebody.”

That quote brings me back to where we began. What is our debate about? It’s essentially this: can the church interpret the Bible in ways that allow faithful, gay Christians to enter into committed same-sex marriage or marriage-like unions, or not? 

Rev. Dr. Clyde Ervine is minister at Knox, St. Catharines, Ont. This is an excerpted version of the talk he delivered at the Speaking Truth in Love event held by the Presbytery of Hamilton. A video of this talk, with his Irish lilt, can be seen at presbyterianrecord.ca.



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FROM THE MODERATOR

Hospitality

Understanding challenges and heartaches. *by* **KAREN HORST**



HEBREWS 13:2

We all claim we are friendly, hospitable churches but it's the newcomer who can tell us the truth. We only have one chance to make a first impression. It begins with the appearance of our church. Is parking easily done and do we have signage that will help others know which door to enter and where to go next? Is the newcomer greeted immediately by a warm and helpful person who is not focused on visiting with others but is intentionally reaching out to those not known to the congregation? Do people smile, make an effort to identify themselves and find something out about those who have come? Do we treat them as outsiders by pouncing on them, especially if they are a younger family? Being too friendly can be as offsetting as the cold shoulder.

I attended a church where I was not known and it was startling to experience how I was left alone. I had to find the way to the sanctuary, finally climbing stairs to the next floor. I took a bulletin thrust at me by an usher while she was busy chatting with a friend. I sat alone and no one glanced my way. Without exaggeration, the only human contact I had was with one woman who banged into me as she was pushing past me down the aisle.

Hospitality is far more than how we first greet people. It is about sincere care for our neighbour as an equal part of our community.

Do we treat them as outsiders by pouncing on them, especially if they are a younger family? Being too friendly can be as offsetting as the cold shoulder. I attended a church where I was not known and it was startling to experience how I was left alone.

How many of our bulletins say, "Be sure to sign the guest book," or "If you are visiting with us for the first time ...?" We unwittingly succeed in reinforcing that they are not one of us. We would be much better to say, "It is good for all of us to be together in worship today."

And how about your coffee hour?

Churches are notorious for offering coffee after service and leaving the visitor sitting or standing alone.

Hospitality welcomes meaningful participation. New people can feel new forever when their ideas are not welcomed and when the same work-horses are used every time for serving meals or volunteering.

Hospitality means we will not only be kind to a stranger but we will help them to be at home in our family, getting to know their gifts and interests. It means understanding their challenges and heartaches. We will care about them as persons rather than seeing them as our next contributing member.

The very finest way for people to feel comfortable and at home in your church is when you invite someone to come to church with you. The best way to recruit new people is through personal invitation. All of us are called to engage in church growth and evangelism.

On a personal note, I say a special thank you to all the congregations and private homes that opened their doors to me. Many people escorted me around, provided meals and accommodation. You have been clear examples of Christian hospitality. +

Rev. Karen Horst is minister at St. Andrew's, Orillia, Ont. She extends congratulations to her moderatorial successor, Rev. Douglas Rollwage.

People & Places

Find more online at presbyterianrecord.ca

Photographs can be uploaded at presbyterianrecord.ca.



KNOX, ST. THOMAS, ONT.

Singers from 18 churches—Presbyterian, Baptist, United, Anglican, Pentecostal and Christian Reformed—joined together for the 'With One Voice' concert on April 10. The event honoured Wayne Carroll, who has served as Knox's organist and director of music for 40 years. In addition to the mass choir, the concert featured Jonathan Oldengarm (director of music at the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal) on Knox's pipe organ, a brass ensemble, and a bagpiper.



CRIEFF HILLS COMMUNITY, PUSLINCH, ONT.

Stephen Roche has served faithfully as the denomination's chief financial officer for 13 years. So in good Presbyterian fashion, at their spring meeting the members of Assembly Council celebrated Roche's upcoming retirement with cake. "The Presbyterian Church in Canada has much to be thankful for in the ministry of Stephen Roche, and we wish him and his family God's blessing in what we know will be an active retirement," concludes a minute of appreciation the Assembly Council will place before the General Assembly in June.



ST. ANDREW'S, BRAMPTON, ONT.

After six weeks of preparatory classes and working with individual mentors, eight young people joined the congregation of St. Andrew's by making professions of faith on Easter Sunday. Pictured are Marcus Parnell, Mekhi Parnell, Leon Chibaya, Simpson Ross, Jason Sooklall, Rev. Rebekah Mitchell, Kaitlin Shepherd, Christian Shepherd, Kyle Nicol and Rev. Geoff Ross.

THE OTHER SIX DAYS

Food, Drink and Documentary

Expressions of faith. *by* **BRADLEY CHILDS**

RESTAURANT

There is something to be said about visibility. I'm not a huge fan of using people's money to build gigantic cathedrals when a congregation could literally be saving people's lives with the money instead. But with that said, there is still something very powerful about the church being a visible presence in our communities. And that's where John 3:16 Malaysian Delights enters the picture. Apparently they have had a restaurant in Richmond, B.C., for a few years and plan to open a new one there this summer. Currently residing in North Vancouver, this place is making the gospel very visible. I love it! According to owner and head chef Daniel Chew, he and his family (the staff) are Christians. But they aren't there to evangelize. They are just there to provide authentic Malaysian food. But at the same time, if people do want to know about the scripture verse they are named for... they'll tell you.

FIND IT @ [facebook.com](#)

HINDU TEMPLE

The Kaal Bhairav Temple—named for the guardian-god Kaal Bhairav—in Ujjain, India, is unique. There are several stories about how this all came about but it's not really the origin that's interesting. It's the offering. See Kaal Bhairav Temple is also known by another name: the Whiskey Temple. Each day hundreds of worshippers and various others come to offer alcohol



The documentary *Queer Hutterite*

at the Kaal Bhairav shrine. Vendors surround the place. So do a lot of others. People hand their alcohol over to the priest who then prays over it and finally pours two thirds of it down a small slit in the statue's mouth and it disappears forever. No one is allowed to examine Kaal Bhairav of course but the miracle happens hundreds of times each day. The remaining third of the offering is given back to the worshippers who often share the remainder with the crowd outside the temple.

FIND IT @ [YouTube Search for "Kaal Bhairav drinking alcohol"](#)

TELEVISION

Twenty-three year old photographer

Kelly Hofer has taken some beautiful pictures of colony life. It's obvious from his photos that he deeply cares for his subjects. Hofer is from rural Manitoba and grew up living communally with a colony of Hutterite Brethren. He has only kind words. But he doesn't live there anymore. Kelly is the subject of a short 15-minute documentary by Calgary filmmaker Laura O'Grady. It is well worth the time if only to see his photographs. The documentary is called *Queer Hutterite*.

FIND IT @ [Search YouTube for "Queer Hutterite"](#)

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at Fairview, Vancouver.

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Miramichi (Chatham), N.B., Calvin; Black River Bridge, St. Paul's; Kouchibouquac, Knox; Full-time minister for a three-point charge; Interim Moderator Rev. Jeffrey M. Murray, 36 Bridge St., Sackville, NB E4L 3N7; 506-536-3311; revjeff@nb.sympatico.ca.

Stanley, N.B., St. Peter's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, NB E3B 1M2; 507-455-8220.

Tabusintac, N.B., St. John's; New Jersey, Zion; and Bartibog Bridge, St. Matthew's; Full-time three-point charge; Interim Moderator Rev. J. Gillis Smith, 535 King George Hwy., Miramichi, NB E1V 1N2; rachmsmi@nbnet.nb.ca.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Beaconsfield, Que., Briarwood; Minister who is able to work with all ages, connect with young families, strong communicator and teacher of the Christian faith; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries; 514-288-5256 ext. 209; rdevries@presbyteriancollege.ca; profile at

briarwoodpresbyterianchurch.ca. Kars, Ont., St. Andrew's and Vernon, Osgoode; Full-time minister, two-point charge; Interim Moderators Rev. Doug Kendall, 613-836-5917; rev.doug@me.com; rev.doug.kendall@gmail.com; and Rev. Shaun Seaman, 613-836-1429; shaun.seaman110@gmail.com.

Pointe-Claire, Que., St. Columba by-the-Lake; Full-time minister able to relate the gospel to contemporary life and to foster a spirit of faith and compelling witness in an open, inclusive, dynamic community; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Kay Diviney; 514-842-3431; assocminister@standrewstpaul.com; see also stcolumba.ca.

Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

Ajax, St. Timothy's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Harry J. Bradley, 4156 Sheppard Ave. E., Scarborough ON M1S 1T3; harryjbradley@gmail.com.

Ashburn, Burns; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Andrew Allison, PO Box 104, Leaskdale ON L0C 1C0; 905-852-5921; a.allison@saintpauls.ca.

Campbellford, St. Andrew's and Burnbrae, St. Andrew's; Full-time minister, two-point charge; Start date September 1, 2016; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Douglas Brown, 132 Northshore Rd., Grafton ON K0K 2G0; 905-349-3198; chloe@eagle.ca.

Guelph, Duff's; seeking a forward-thinking full-time minister to provide strong leadership, preach to the practicalities and encourage new forms of worship, music and ministry; Interim Moderator Rev. Bill Bynum, c/o Duff's Presbyterian Church, 319 Brock St. S., Guelph ON N1H 6H9; congregation's profile available on church's website, the Ministry & Church Vocations website and from the Interim Moderator.

Palmerston, Knox; Full-time new grad or 3/4 time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Kathy Morden, PO Box 8, Neustadt ON N0G 2M0; 519-321-1942; kcpc-revkathy@wightman.ca.

Streetsville (Mississauga); St. Andrew's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Gale Macdonald, 1338 Clarkson Rd. N., Mississauga, ON L5J 2W5; 905-822-8911; revgalemacdonald@gmail.com.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Bayfield, Knox; Part-time; Interim

Moderator Rev. John Henderson, PO Box 824, Exeter, ON N0M 1S6; 519-235-2608; henderson.johncharles@gmail.com.

Brantford, Greenbrier; Part-time

minister (66%); Interim Moderator Joyce DeGier-VanderSpek; 519-469-3904; joycedegiervdspek@gmail.com.

Innerkip, Innerkip; near Woodstock

is a thriving congregation seeking an executive pastor who is a strategic thinker with the ability to lead, encourage and celebrate an extremely gifted staff of 8. Session is policy, vision oriented and committed to the historic living gospel of Jesus Christ; for a job description please send your profile or resume to innpresb@execulink.com or stan.cox@sympatico.ca.

Kirkwall, Kirkwall; Full-time minister;

Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Fred

Shaffer, 70 James St. S., Hamilton ON L8P 2Y8; 905-522-2792; fshaffer@bellnet.ca.

Owen Sound, St. Andrew's; Part-time music director/organist; see full description at standrewsownsound.org.

Simcoe, St. Paul's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Stanley Cox, 65 Tan Ave., Waterford, ON N0E 1Y0; 519-443-4798; stan.cox@sympatico.ca; sppc@kwic.com; visit website stpaulssimcoe.com.

Tiverton, Knox and Glammis, St. Paul's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Owen Kim; 19 Brownlee St. S., PO Box 526, Teeswater ON N0G 2S0; 519-392-6955; maplemmission@gmail.com.

Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

No vacancies submitted.


Synod of Saskatchewan

No vacancies submitted.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

No vacancies submitted.

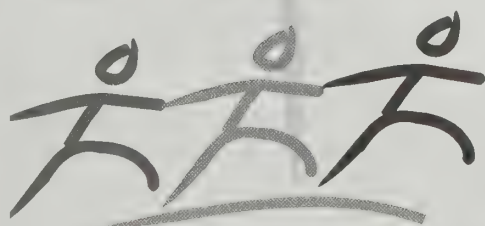
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Major Rev. Dr. McKillican, Donald Royce,
(C.D., B.A., M.Div., M.Th., D.Min), Presbyterian minister, educator and military chaplain died

Sunday, March 20, 2016, in his 93rd year. Born in Alliston, Ont., on May 25, 1923, Donald McKillican was the first son of David and Emily (Latimer) McKillican.

Rev. McKillican married Anna May Little in September 1947 and was predeceased by his dearly cherished wife in 1982. He is predeceased by his sister Joyce Lugg (Cyril) and remembered by their daughters: Doreen, Brenda, Joan and Marilyn. He is predeceased by brothers Douglas (Shirley) and Kenneth (Marie) and nephew David. He is remembered by Marie and her son Mark (Tiffany) and their children Ethan and Joshua. He was predeceased by his dearly loved wife Gladys W. Watts (née Hollinger) whom he married in December 1984.

He is survived by brother Bernal (Marge) and their children Boyd (Mary) great-nephew Alexander and niece Andrea, by step-children Gordon and SueAnne Watts and step-grandchildren Genevieve (Andrew Epp), James (Sarah), Joel and Jonathan (Melissa) Watts and three great-grandchildren.

Following elementary and high school in Alliston, Don enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1941. He went overseas in December 1942 and served in 423 Reconnaissance and Anti-Submarine Squadron until war's end. Returning home he attended the Veterans' Rehabilitation School in Toronto. Don graduated from University College, University of Toronto, in May 1950 and from Knox College in May 1953. Following ordination at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Markham, on May 13, 1953, Rev. McKillican was called to the Markham and Stouffville charge serving until 1959. From 1955 to 1956 he attended New College, University of Edinburgh. In 1962 Knox College awarded him a Master

of Theology degree. A strong advocate of life-long learning, Don received a Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Seminary, University of Chicago, in June 1991.

Always keen to share his calling and knowledge, Don was dean of students at Knox College from 1959 to 1968, a member of the Presbyterian Church's Board of Missionary and Deaconess Training School and Ewart College and the General Assembly's Committee on Recruitment. He also served as chairman of the General Assembly's Board of Education from 1960 to 1971. Don left Knox in 1968 to become registrar and dean of student services at the new Georgian College, Barrie. In 1983 he became principal of the Barrie campus and senior academic officer. In February 1987 he was appointed principal emeritus and was commissioned to write the 25-year history of the college. Education in the Marketplace, A History of Georgian College, 1967-1992 was published in 1992.

Don maintained an active association with the military, serving in the Royal Canadian Army Chaplain Corps. From 1953 to 1974 he served as chaplain in the Toronto Scottish Regiment, the Queen Mother's Own. The regiment named him honorary chaplain for life on September 15, 2002. He also served as chaplain of the Grey and Simcoe Foresters 1974-1978, the Veterans' Club of Barrie 1987-2005, the Royal Canadian Military Institute Toronto 1990-1993 and the Huronia Branch Canadian Airborne Forces Association from 1998 to 2016.

Memorial contributions may be made to Knox College, 59 St. George Street, Toronto, or St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Barrie, Ont. A funeral service to celebrate Don's life and witness was held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 47 Owen Street, Barrie, under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Rick Horst on Thursday, March 24, 2016 at 2 p.m.

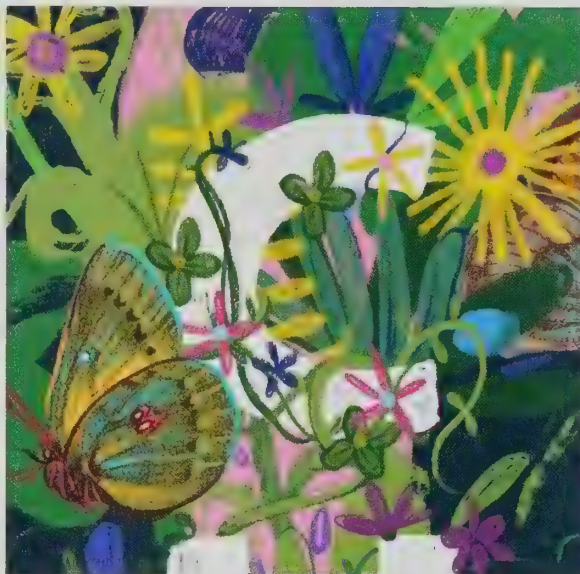
"Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). ☙

FOR THE JOURNEY

Born Again Mission

Rebirth in the church in the 21st century, part three. *by* DAVID WEBBER

THE CHURCH IS DYING OUT in the 21st century, failing particularly in the Canadian context. One has to acknowledge that across denominations the church is shrinking in almost every way. I believe something else besides failure is happening though. I am convinced that the Lord of the Church is reforming or rebirthing his church in this century after the example of the church in the New Testament. What is it going to be like? In the last two months I have discussed what a born again church might look like in terms of church buildings, leadership and the sacraments. This month in the final part of this three-part series I want to look at mission.



MISSION

The apostolic or New Testament church existed on the margins of society, often functioning underground. It was a counterculture community. It did everything possible to differentiate itself from the practices of society that went against its core beliefs. In that sense, it was a prophetic community.

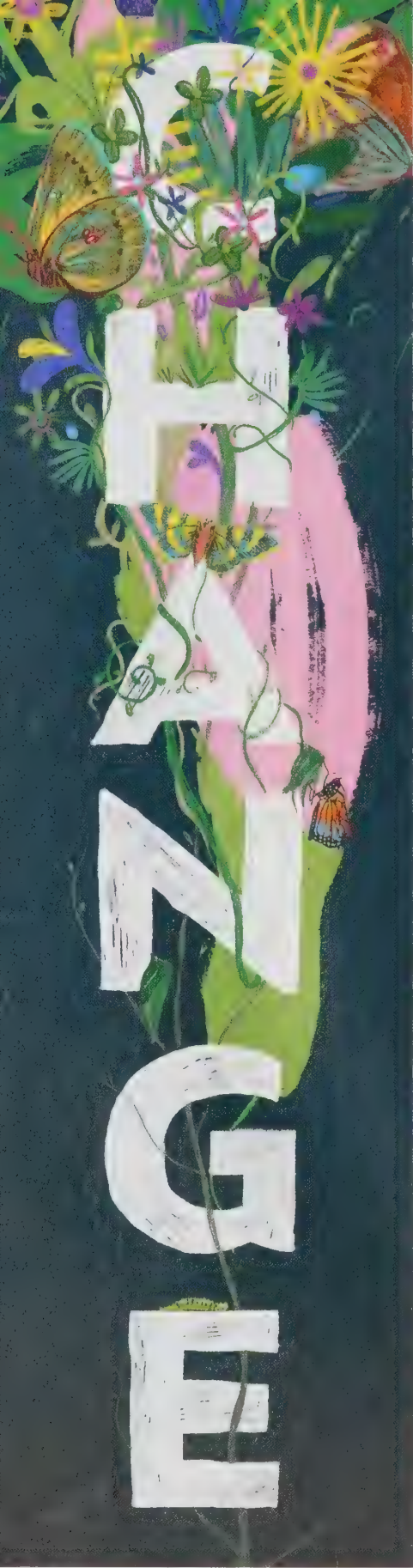
That being said, the New Testament church had a definite missional stance towards culture as well, which it expressed in evangelistic ways, often at great cost. New Testament communities of faith were an incarnational-sending people. It was the mission of each community of faith to go out to the people. They witnessed for Christ in the midst of the dominant culture and it often cost them dearly, sometimes even their lives.

There was a drift away from this with the coming of the age of Christendom. The church became perceived as central to society and the surrounding culture. Its approach to culture became attractional and extractional, i.e. 'come to us' and 'we will take from you.' The results have been devastating to Christ's mission through the church.

Today, perhaps since the Enlightenment period as the church has struggled to continue in its Christendom mode, it often bends over backwards to reflect the dominant or popular

culture even when it is blatantly non-biblical. Recently I listened as a leader within the Presbyterian Church in Canada said in a meeting of a church court, "mission is a pejorative word." Certainly it would seem so. We all but dropped the word from usage at the national church level years ago. Have we become a church that has totally sold out to the dominant culture, so entrenched in an attractional mode as a survival strategy that we no longer have a missional stance towards culture? It would seem so to me. Congregations seldom have any real active mission in their own community. And mission support beyond the particular community of the congregation is so buried within bureaucracy that it pretty much feels like a church tax rather than direct mission involvement and support. It all seems to have become so attractional and extractional and abstract.

In the church born again for a post-Christendom age, faith communities will return to being small and existing on the fringe of society, return to being countercultural, >



FOR THE JOURNEY, continued

return to being missional communities. Faith communities will once again become proactive with regards to mission in their own local communities, both prophetically as well as evangelically. This activity will not be guided by a denominational handbook nor for that matter by national doctrinal committees, but by a reading and interpretation of scripture done in community in small hermeneutical circles at the local level. Mission work will actually be done locally to serve people for Christ and to bring people to knowing Christ's love. And beyond the local community of direct influence, faith communities will insist upon direct involvement with the mission work that they support abroad. Presbyterians Sharing in the Presbyterian Church in Canada will change. It will become primarily a linking and facilitating organization rather than a money collection and dispersal agency of the church. Its work will become the exciting and needful work of encouraging and facilitating direct involvement of faith communities with mission at the local and the global level.

CONCLUSION

The church of Christendom has never been very good at embracing change. Change is usually forced upon it. In the West, the force for change is almost always economic pressure. Since small churches will experience that kind of pressure first, and since most small churches are in rural and semi-rural settings, the front line for the birth of a post-Christendom church in the Presbyterian Church in Canada may well be in rural and semi-rural settings. The rural church may well be the developing and proving ground for virtually all the changes I have alluded to. In this sense, the rural church, or at least the small church, will find itself on the

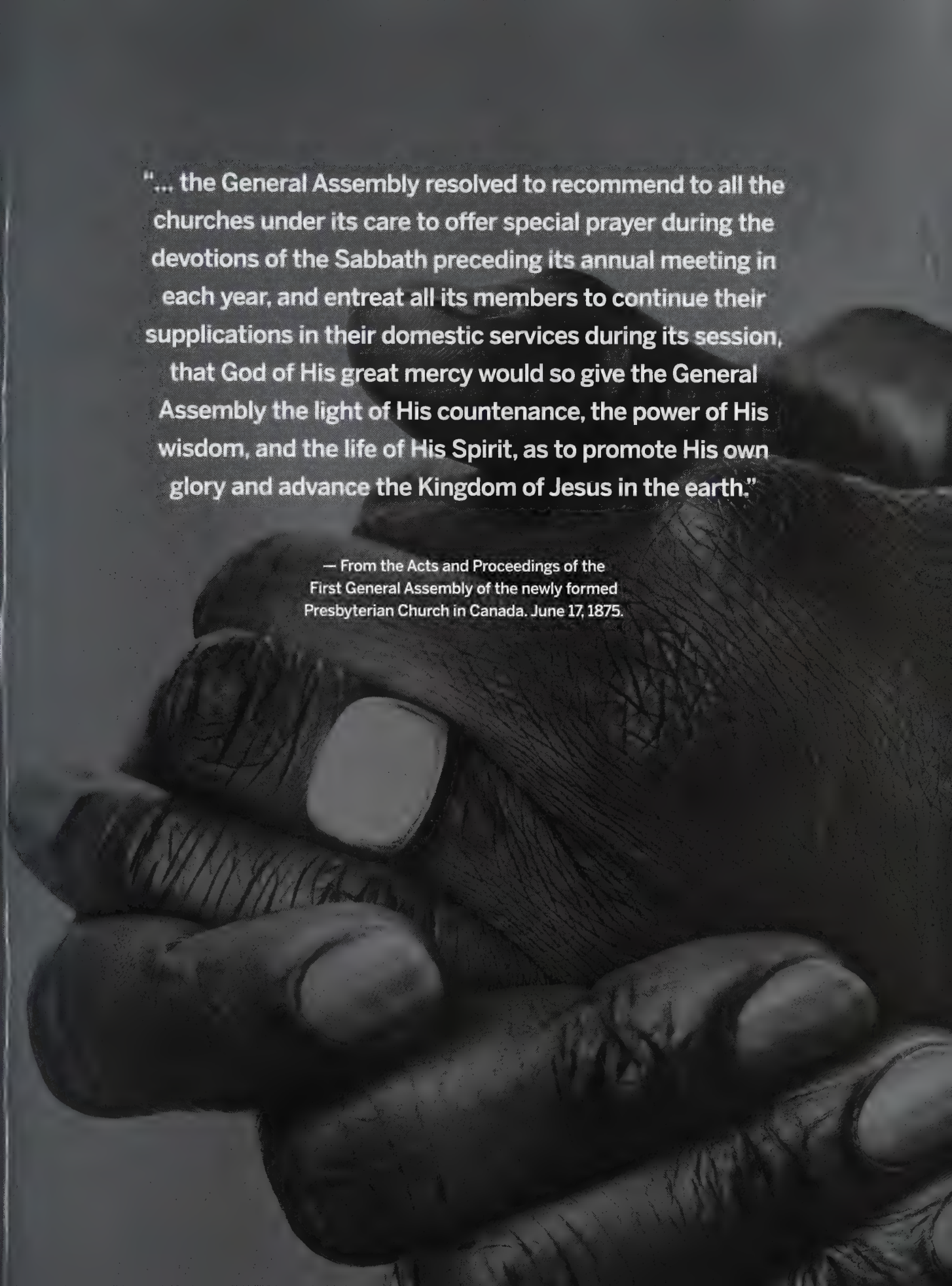
forefront of the exciting reforms I envisage Christ to be bringing about.

But here is the thing. All of the major parts of the church entrenched in its institutional form will have to find a way to gracefully facilitate a deinstitutionalization to allow for the changes I envisage.

For example, the courts of the church, national church committees, national church offices and the colleges are going to have to make some important decisions very quickly. Either they will recognize the need for radical change and facilitate and support it, or they will end up becoming irrelevant. I fear it is the latter that is happening. From the perspective of a reborn post-Christendom church, particularly in rural Canada, the courts and committees of the church, church offices and the colleges are often seen as maintainers of the status quo and are rapidly being viewed as superfluous. Their attempts at change are too small, too slow and way too conservative.

This is not an age for dithering and tinkering with the stuff of institution like ordination and marriage to make them reflect the norms of contemporary culture whilst thinking that this is being progressive. This is an age that calls for brave and radical change rooted in deinstitutionalization. For example, the question that needs to be dealt with is whether the church should be ordaining clerics and maintaining a priestly caste at all. The question that has to be dealt with is whether the church should be officiating at all at what has become largely a civil institution of marriage. +

Rev. David Webber, now retired, was the founding missionary in British Columbia's Cariboo house church ministry. This is the third of a three part series. webberink@telus.net.



"... the General Assembly resolved to recommend to all the churches under its care to offer special prayer during the devotions of the Sabbath preceding its annual meeting in each year, and entreat all its members to continue their supplications in their domestic services during its session, that God of His great mercy would so give the General Assembly the light of His countenance, the power of His wisdom, and the life of His Spirit, as to promote His own glory and advance the Kingdom of Jesus in the earth."

— From the Acts and Proceedings of the
First General Assembly of the newly formed
Presbyterian Church in Canada. June 17, 1875.

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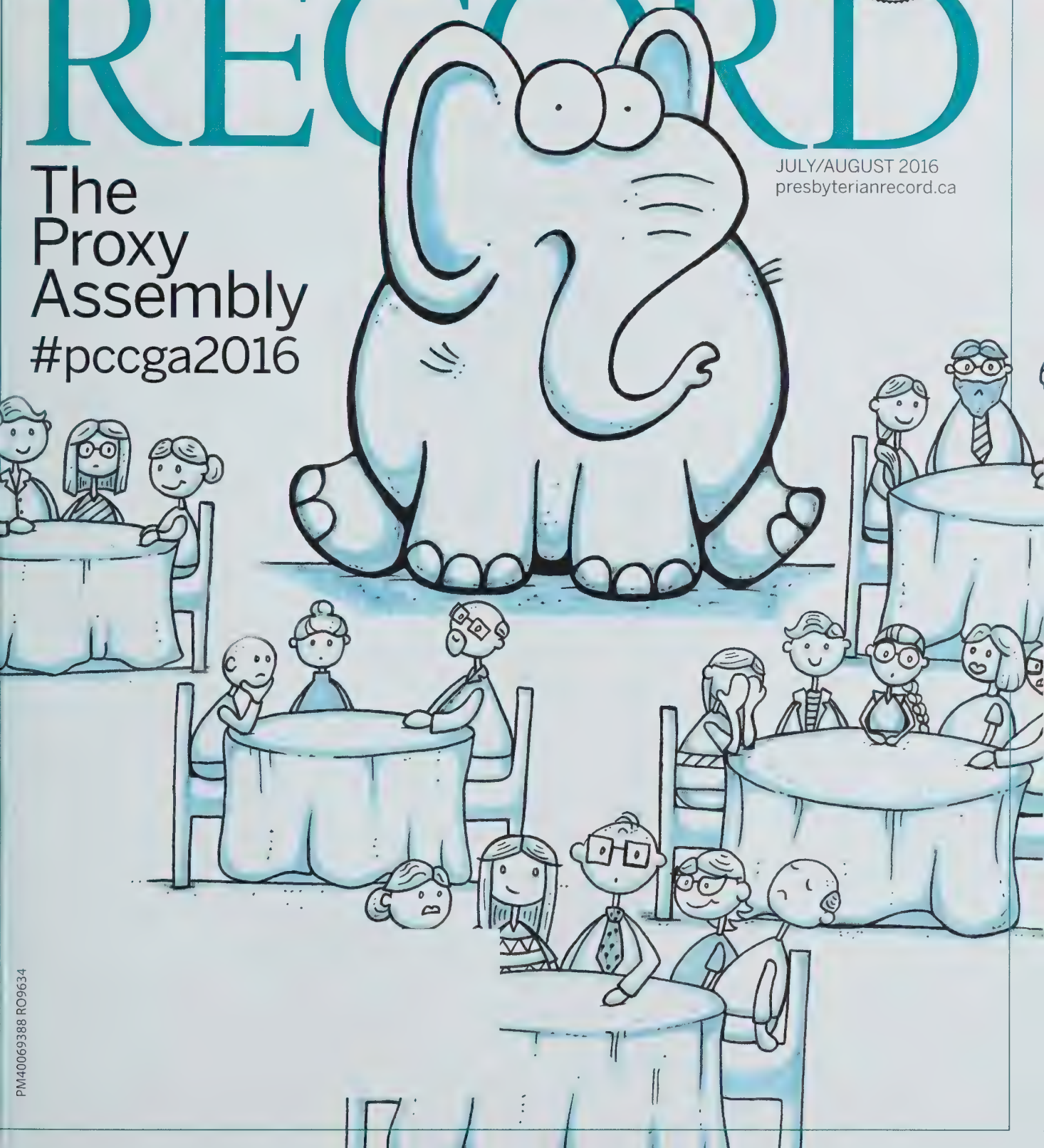
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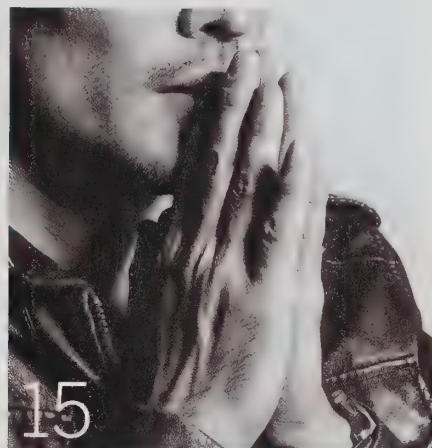
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JULY/AUGUST 2016



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FOR THE RECORD

Bridging the Solitudes

The messenger's target is large. *by* **ANDREW FAIZ**

Shooting the messenger is an old tradition, and that is part of our job description. Critiques of the *Record* are merely a metaphor for the heightened, some might say extremist, divides within the PCC today.

For publishing four profiles of LGBT members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the *Record* was accused of bias and undue influence by some readers. At least one cancelled their subscription. For publishing a monthly column dedicated to the Renewal Fellowship, the *Record* has been accused of bias and undue influence by some readers. Subscriptions have been dropped for that reason.

Shooting the messenger is an old tradition, and that is part of our job description. Critiques of the *Record* are merely a metaphor for the heightened, some might say extremist, divides within the PCC today.


In his blog *Encrusted Words* (on the *Record's* website) Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries asks, "Can We Talk." In the essay he hones in on the point where traditionalists and progressives differ on the issue of human sexuality: For those in favour of full LGBT inclusion in the life of the church, he writes, "it is inconceivable to think of any kind of disjunction between identity and behavior. If a person is gay (if that is a key feature of his or her essential identity—that is who they are) then a denial of the opportunity or actuality of intimate relationships is seen as a refusal of their person—a denial of their essential identity."

For those who espouse a more traditional interpretation of scripture, "sexual orientation is not understood in essentialist terms—it is seen as an element of a person's life, but not as a defining or

essential aspect of the person's being and identity. In fact, 'traditionalists' are inclined to believe that the essentialist account of sexual orientation (in terms of gay and lesbian identity) is a particular feature of modern culture—it reflects a socially constructed account of human life that our culture has begun to embrace and live in a deep way."

Each side has rich scriptural study to bolster their position; some of which has been shared in the *Record* over the past year. Passionate scholarship has been hurled back and forth and there are few seeming points of agreement because, as De Vries points out, it is a matter of how personhood is defined by the two sides. Each believes themselves to be inclusive on their terms; but it is the terms that differ.

If the *Record* has any influence on the PCC—and it is hard to believe we do given our current financial bind and our request for help to continue—it is to name and bridge the solitudes.

All are welcome to the table, all are welcome to worship. An important role the *Presbyterian Record* can play is to give honour to the different voices in our denomination. This is the publication for the whole church. And it might include people with whom we disagree. That's just how church is. Let us get to know each other and be church. Fighting is easy; listening is hard. 

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

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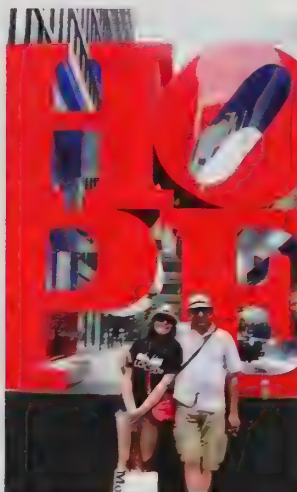
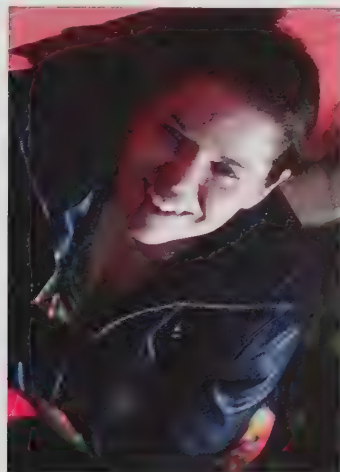
Canada  

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and an avid wearer of hats.
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SUSAN MATTINSON is min-
ister at First, Thunder Bay,
Ont. She's also the creator of
the comic strip "Pastor Shep,"
which appears monthly in
these pages. Along with minis-
try, Susan enjoys good friends,
good music, good books and
good scotch. She is grateful
for the love and support of her
husband, Colin Rackham, and
the company of Watson the
dachshund and Tucker the cat.
This was her second General
Assembly as a commissioner.



ANDREW FAIZ has been a
journalist for over 40 years,
working in TV news, radio,
documentary film, newspapers
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a janitor, an accountant and office
temp, and a short order cook
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playwright and producer whose
works have appeared across
Toronto. He lives in Toronto
with his wife and daughter.

Letters

PRESBYTERIAN
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Respect

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Write to us: LETTERS@PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA

Lots to Talk About

There are lots of conversations happening in our denomination. Many of them are online and worth your time to pursue. There are several Presbyterian Church in Canada related Facebook pages, including the Record's. On our website are a variety of engaging blogs—Web, Tech and Worship by Wayne Sankarlal; The Blooming Reverend by

Kristine O'Brien; From Ministry to Motherhood by Becky Roushorne-Lau; The Messy Table by Katie Munnik; Passionately His by Jeff Loach; Encrusted Words by Roland De Vries; plus Matthew Ruttan and Patricia Schneider.

There are reflections on the work of the Spirit, and the hand of God in all things. These are important conversations;

many are begun in the printed publication and then carried forward online.

Join the conversation. Your voice is vital to fellowship.

ANDREW FAIZ, SENIOR EDITOR

Fresh. Colourful.

A few thank yous for your June edition:

Thank you for adding Vivian Ketchum to your regular contributors. Her writing is fresh, colourful, thoughtful—always calling up new ways of embracing a deep spirituality that in these days is sometimes hard to remember and celebrate!

Thank you for longtime writer Laurence DeWolfe as he guides us consistently into more helpful ways of holding the old well-known Bible narratives. Specifically in June, for his portrayal of the kingdom of God as “the realm of reversals.” Excellent! Helpful! A contemporary tool for a new understanding of the old biblical stories.

The Record is a faithful and courageous gift to our people—carry on boldly!

TERRY SAMUEL, LION'S HEAD, ONT.

Great Hope for the Future

Re Born Again Mission and Reborn Leadership, May and June

David Webber, as usual you bring a hopeful, encouraging and prophetic word

Pastor Shep



www.pastorShep.ca

©Susan Mattinson

to us all. Thank you for this reminder that God's mission in Christ goes on in new (old!) forms, even as the structures of the Christendom church collapse around us. May those who have ears to hear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

KEVIN LIVINGSTON, ONLINE COMMENT

Excellent. Thank you for this, Rev. Webber. It has brought me great hope for the future of the church. I couldn't agree more.

CAROL ANN KEYS, ONLINE COMMENT

"Reborn Leadership" provides a good vision of the post-Christendom church or Jesus movement. Institutional control will be reduced and there will be fewer professional masters of religious ceremonies. Meetings will take the form of roundtable discussions. The institutional church will give way to a Jesus movement with a Jesus discussion.

The transition from the institutional church of Christendom to a Jesus movement is the central issue. Will the Presbyterian Church resist the change or help to facilitate the change to a Jesus movement? Church buildings could be a place for Jesus discussion meetings. Institutional control should be limited to some guidance materials to assist lay people to have interesting discussions.

This simple approach is in keeping with Presbyterian origins. It can be done in parallel with present activities at churches. This can be done.

ANDREW MITCHELL, ONLINE COMMENT

Do Regular Back Ups

Re Ransomware ... Late Breaking News, Web, Tech and Worship Blog

As usual, a great article Wayne and very timely as these types of malware are becoming so prolific. One of our church computers was infected by ransomware a few months ago. Luckily, we had just done a full back up the day before, so we were able to reformat and

reinstall with very minimal loss of data. Not to say it wasn't a huge pain as well as a day's downtime without the computer, but we were back up and running the next day and we didn't pay the \$500 they were demanding to unlock the files. (Which, unfortunately, some people do; and that's why these programs are so lucrative for those who create them.) Our experience really reinforced the need to do regular back ups and to be vigilant with email received that includes links and/or attachments.

LORETTA FOX, ONLINE COMMENT

Humble Confidence

Re Complicated and Uncertain Times, June

I appreciate the humble confidence Ian Ross-McDonald has in the future of the church and the role of his office. I also appreciate the grace-filled tone of his reflections. I am very happy that he has the job he does and he is one of the many people we have "in the right seat on the bus" that gives me hope and excitement for our church as a movement.

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POP CHRISTIANITY

The Red Spot Project

Would Dad understand his granddaughter? *by* **ANDREW FAIZ**

My daughter's friend, R, 14 years of age, was buying tampons for herself. She thought, 'these sure are expensive.' Then she wondered how homeless women afford feminine products. She researched a little and realized it was a big issue. A lot of homeless women use newspapers and other inefficient and unhygienic methods.

She called my daughter, Z, also 14. They met in a coffee shop, tossed around some ideas. They founded the Red Spot Project ([facebook.com/theredspotproject](https://www.facebook.com/theredspotproject)) with a goal of raising \$750 during the month of June. R had called a few women's shelters in Toronto and one welcomed her initiative.

As my daughter was explaining the project to me, I thought of my father. Dad was born in 1919 in what was then British India. He died in 1989 in Canada. He outlived the Raj and the Commonwealth, and survived the early decades of a nascent country. When asked why he came to Canada, when he had family legacy and a respected name in Pakistan, he always said it was to give his kids better opportunities in life.

Would Dad understand the Red Spot Project? 'Dear Dad, your granddaughter is collecting money to buy tampons and pads for homeless women!'

I've talked to a few women of my generation. Most of them relate that when they were 14 they wouldn't dare admit their menstrual cycle to anyone. Some had their mothers buy the



Would Dad understand
the Red Spot Project?
'Dear Dad, your
granddaughter is
collecting money to buy
tampons and pads for
homeless women!'

products. One said even her mother didn't want to talk about it—gave her a book to work it out for herself.

It was a shh-cycle; so much not talked about or admitted; so much unsaid. Shame attached to normal body functions. To hear some of my contemporaries tell it, it was a society held together with shame; a culture of

condescending superiority.

Of course now everybody seems to talk about everything and you wish for those sotto voce days. It edges occasionally to political correctness; often languishes in over-indulgence. But as annoying as it is, I suppose, it is better than the cultural silent treatment. The quiet and hopeless anxiety, the shame filled days for feeling weird and different.

Would Dad understand his granddaughter's project? I don't know. He was always amused by the differences between Canada and the world into which he was born. He enjoyed watching hockey, now and then, and called it the Narowahl Hockey League, naming it for the city where he was born. It was his way of claiming one myth in the name of another. A way of saying this thing here is very different from that thing there. Not better, not worse, just different.

I think he might have been amused by the Red Spot Project. Not embarrassed. By the end of his short life he was a lukewarm apologist for things Canadian. He recognized how different the world was and he was mostly okay with it.

I think, he would have been proud of his granddaughter for the person she is. And if along the way she happens to launch a project that deals with distasteful subjects to help the less fortunate, he would have been her greatest defendant. +

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

BULLETIN

Community and World News

BABY

Welcome to
CANADA

REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

Sponsors Wait

Syrian refugees arriving slowly.

by GILLIAN SECORD

When St. Andrew's, Kitchener, Ont., was paired with a refugee family in January, they were told the family would arrive in three days to a week. "We'd been told that all the medical and security checks were done, and they were simply waiting for travel," Rev. Mark Lewis said. Almost six months later, they are still waiting; and they are not the only ones.

Many churches sponsoring refugee families have found themselves in a similar situation, >

REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP, continued

being advised on the imminent arrival of the family and then waiting months longer than expected.

These sponsored families are part of the Blended Visa Office-Referred program. In cases like these, refugee families are chosen for resettlement and screened by the United Nations' refugee agency, and then paired with sponsors in Canada. The Government of Canada provides refugee support for half a year, and the sponsoring group provides support for the other six months, as well as assistance for the newcomers as they settle in. Since most of the screening has already been completed by the time the refugees are paired with a sponsor, they can be ready to leave for Canada almost immediately.

Expecting quick arrivals, many congregations started making arrangements right away.

"We rented and furnished an apartment for the family, but it's still sitting empty at this point, and a significant portion of the funds we raised are being squandered going into the rent," Lewis said. He estimates that they've spent about \$8,000 on rent—money that he said could be better spent actually helping the family.

"In Barrie, because the housing market is so tight we wanted to get an apartment for the family right away, so we could be sure they had one," said Laurie Watt, a member of the refugee sponsorship committee from St. Andrew's, Barrie, Ont. "We're afraid that if we give up [the apartment we found], we won't be able to find another one in time when we receive word they're arriving."

According to Ruth Millar, who has worked on a settlement council for 20 years and is the head of the refugee sponsorship committee at St. Andrew's, Barrie, the problem isn't necessarily that someone is doing something



Suleyman, Emel and Esinat are three of the six members of the Musa family who arrived in Canada on Feb. 21 thanks to a sponsorship by Knox, Oakville, Ont. Their BVOR case was processed during the government's push to resettle 25,000 Syrians by the end of February.

The Government of Canada provides refugee support for half a year, and the sponsoring group provides support for the other six months, as well as assistance for the newcomers as they settle in.

wrong. "What you have to understand is that there's nothing fast about immigration. But we need to have better communication about this, and better understanding of wait times."

Since meeting its goal of bringing 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by the end of February, the government has slowed its processing rate and has removed the priority it placed on Syrian cases. Levels of overseas staff, which were boosted temporarily to help the government meet its goal, have returned to regular levels. While it isn't clear yet if that will affect wait times for refugees already screened, it does create frustration with the groups waiting.

"We were really excited, this is an incredible opportunity to put God's love into action, and we just keep waiting," Watt said. "We just want them to arrive so we can help them get on with their lives." 🍀

Gillian Secord is the Record's summer intern.

Kenora Centre Ending Emergency Shelter Program

AFTER STRUGGLING for months to keep their emergency shelter open, the Kenora Fellowship Centre will be winding up the program as of June 30, with plans to eventually transition it to a new location run by another group.

Knox United, Kenora, Ont., has offered to take on the task until Sept. 1.

In the May issue, the *Record* reported that the Kenora Centre was urgently seeking funding in order to keep the shelter running as staff struggled with a new zoning bylaw.

This bylaw states that shelters can only be located in residential zones, not in the downtown core where the shelter is currently located. The Ne-Chee Friendship Centre hopes to take over the shelter program and is aiming to move into a new location in order to better serve the community. With the bylaw in place, they are struggling to find an area to put the shelter that would be accessible to those who need it, while still abiding by the city's zoning laws.

"It's very frustrating," said Nicole Leighton, the fundraising and communications coordinator of the Kenora Fellowship Centre.

An amendment to the bylaw that would have allowed shelters to operate in commercial areas was defeated by the Kenora city council on June 14. Councillors cited a need for a more long-term solution, and concerns that the amendment would not

**"It has become
glaringly clear that
the emergency
shelter has touched
many people's sense
of humanity and lack
of response to this
need for decades."**

give the city authority over the shelter's location, opening up potential conflict with local businesses.

On June 22, protestors walked from the Kenora Centre to sleep outside the doors of city hall to oppose the council's decision.

"It has become glaringly clear that the emergency shelter has touched many people's sense of humanity and the lack of response to this need for decades," Yvonne Bearbull, executive director, told the *Record* in an email.

For years the Kenora Centre has struggled financially and logistically to continue offering an emergency shelter, and Bearbull stands by the board's decision to end the program. It is "bigger than what we are able to provide," she said. —Gillian Secord

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PARTNERS WITH AUGSBURG FORTRESS

AS OF JULY 1, all resources for the Presbyterian Church in Canada will be sold and distributed by Augsburg Fortress.

Augsburg Fortress is a Christian publishing house that creates and distributes a wide variety of resources for the Lutheran, United, and Anglican churches in Canada. They produce denomination-specific resources, as well as books, curricula, music, Bibles, and church supplies.

The PCC will still create its various resources, but Augsburg Fortress will take care of the distribution. The partnership will "offer members of the PCC constituency a seamless method for ordering both PCC resources, curriculum and other materials," a statement put out by the church explained. "This one-stop shopping model will make ordering resources and materials easier."

After the closure of the Women's Missionary Society Book Room in 2015, the Resource Centre has distributed the church's print resources. Those not created by the church were ordered through third parties, Augsburg Fortress among them.

"We have over 20,000 items for sale," Hardy Willms, the chief financial officer of Augsburg, said to this year's General Assembly. +

—Gillian Secord

INTERVIEW

A Vulnerable Church

Bishop of the Reformed Church of Transylvania speaks to assembly.

by ANDREW FAIZ

BISHOP BELA KATO, leader of the Reformed Church in Transylvania, presented Rev. Douglas Rollwage, Moderator of the 142nd General Assembly, with a banner commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

The Transylvanian Reformed Church dates its roots to 1517. Their Reformation started in 1536 and they were officially Reformed by 1564, the year John Calvin died.

As the Moderator noted, Kato's presence at assembly this year reminds us of our tradition and history.

In the last 100 years, however, that history has been troubled. Once a part of the Hungarian empire, Transylvania was annexed to Romania by the Trianon Treaty of 1920 after the First World War. The Communist regime that ruled Romania then nationalized all church properties starting in 1948.

Since the fall of the Communism in 1989, about half of the 2,100 properties belonging to Hungarian-speaking churches, which were confiscated by the state, have been returned. Of those properties, 538 were Reformed Church schools, which were part of an intricate network of education, charity and community work. Also taken were farms that the church used to generate income to pay for its work.

Kato told the assembly: "The Reformed Church in Romania has fought steadily for freedom of worship, for the religious, human and community rights of its believers, as well as for the restitution of its



Bishop Bela Kato presents a banner to the General Assembly.

educational and social institutions."

The church currently has 600,000 members, approximately 1,100 churches and 540 ministers. That represents three per cent of the Romanian population; the mainline Orthodox Church has 17 million members.

A third of the Reformed Church's members have left Romania, mostly for other parts of Europe for economic reasons.

And those remaining feel under nationalist attack by the Romanian majority.


With their property still in the hands of the state, their members fleeing for better opportunities, and their culture, history and traditions demeaned, the bishop explained, the Hungarian Reformed Church in

Romania feels very vulnerable.

It has been part of their tradition for the church to be fully integrated into the lives of its members, providing education and health care, along with rigorous spiritual training and care. Forced into a Romanian nationalism, the bishop fears his half-millennium legacy will fade. Even his language is discouraged in his country.

Three years into his role as bishop, Kato finds himself fighting for the very heart of his church which has been torn apart by geo-politics, political ideology and now nationalism. His denomination is a minority struggling to maintain its identity.

Kato asks Canadian Presbyterians to hold the Romanian government to account. The PCC and the Reformed Transylvanian church have had a long relationship. Brian Johnston, retiring this year, has been a stalwart PCC mission worker in Romania, teaching English and directing two choirs since 1997. Kato thanked the assembly for "sending us Brian Johnston."

Kato said to the assembly: "We witness, that all Christians are responsible to watch in their living places over their families, over the church and its members, over the community, in their daily lives ministration, always hearing the word of the Lord—to warn the wicked to repent of evil ways, to encourage the faithful to go along the path of the Lord without fear and worry." 

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

Faith.

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KALEIDOSCOPICALLY

Summer Time

A natural time to think about time. *by* KATIE MUNNIK

THE SPOUSE bought me a new watch battery and it came with a lifetime guarantee. Isn't that strange? But he reminded me that I already have a cast iron pot with a lifetime guarantee. And marriage, too. How's that for promises? He knows how to make me smile.

I slipped my watch around my wrist and listened to its now constant tick.

These days, our daughter is sporting her own brand new, rather grown-up watch. It was a perfect birthday present from her grandparents. She loves its real leather strap and the tiny window that reliably shows the date. When I was her age, I had a very similar watch but, unlike hers, mine needed to be wound. I used to think >

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY, continued

that I needed to make an effort to make time go. A very adult responsibility.

Maybe summer is a natural time to think about time. These are the long, lazy days that slip past all too quickly, and the short fire-lit nights that we will remember when the weather once again turns cold. These are also days to measure against days past. What has changed since last summer? What have we gained and what has slipped away with time?

Over the millennia, we've wrung out our imaginations developing new ways of measuring time. Possibly the oldest account of a sundial comes from the Old Testament king of Judah, Ahaz, who measured the passage of the sun against a set of stairs. The Babylonians, the Greeks and later the Romans all used sundials—the hemicycle, the arachne, the antiboreum—but come a cloudy day, these were just clever paperweights.

Medieval churches throughout Europe used candle clocks. Early models relied on many candles of the same

size, and later carefully graduated candles took their place. Time, then, was measured out in spent light. In ancient China, incense clocks were used and proved an accurate method because they had no flame and so the wind could have little effect.

The Bible measures time in generations. Which is beautiful but reliable. Biblical generations are wobbly. In some books, three-score-and-ten sets the pace, but in others those biblical lifespans expand. Isaiah, Moses, Abraham and Sarah all stretched well into their new century, and Methuselah's 900 years boggle the mind. All these biographies complicate historical readings of the Bible. When we consider lifespans and generations like those, the Bible becomes theological poetry, maybe history rewritten as myth. We can read it as reality shot through with a beautiful sense of exaggeration that opens us up to incomprehensively abundant grace.

Back in May, the world's oldest person died in New York City. Susannah

Mushatt Jones lived to be 116 years old. Now the title is held by Emma Morano-Martinuzzi, who is just a few months younger than Miss Susie was. She credits her own long life to eating three raw eggs a day and being single. Think I'd rather not. The Spouse's poached eggs are far too good.

But maybe we need these chronological giants for perspective. They might teach us that life may be long but time is short. It folds in on itself as generations overlap, much to our joy and (parental) exhaustion. They show us that our lives can coincide with all manner of wisdom.

Crows can live to 20, remembering faces. In South American mangroves, macaws can live to 80. Bowhead whales live beyond 200—which means that there are whales in our Arctic this summer that predate Canada.

We each have our span of summers. Each begins with sticky buds and the surprise of flowers, then stretches out into these long days, wet or bright, warm or chilly, eliciting delight, disappointment, nostalgia. When I was a kid, I spent my summers at camp and the woods of Quebec became the assumed backdrop for every wilderness story from the Bible to Peter Pan to every single Trixie Belden adventure. I never wanted to go home. If only I could stretch time and stay here forever. Standing around the campfire, under the star-marked sky, the final verse of *Amazing Grace* brought the shivers I am still feeling now.

"When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun." ☕

Katie Munnik lives in Cardiff, Wales, with three kids and a professor husband. She blogs at The Messy Table on presbyterianrecord.ca



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PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

The Trouble With Hosea

Words of invitation and promise. *by* **LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

Hosea 1:2-10 and 11:1-11

July 24 and 31, 2016

Pentecost 10 and 11

The book of Hosea is an extended rant by a God who is mad with love for a covenant partner, mad with hurt for that partner's unfaithfulness, just plain mad at human stupidity and arrogance.

God doesn't just use words, though there are a lot of words in the book. God makes Hosea do crazy and heartbreaking things. God makes Hosea give his own flesh to show God's wounds.

The book of Hosea is erotic, both sexual and sensual. Chapter 1 is about Hosea and Gomer, the prophet and the apparently unredeemed prostitute. She bears three children for purely prophetic purposes. It seems Hosea fathers the firstborn. >

It's not clear who begets the second and third children. In Chapter 3, God orders Hosea to fall in love with another unfaithful partner. In fact, Hosea buys her, and tries to enforce celibacy on her! Neither the practical nor the prophetic purpose of that is clear.

By Chapter 11 it seems God is looking for a new way to communicate and argue with the people. No longer the heartbroken, dishonoured husband incarnated in Hosea. God is now a frustrated, forsaken mother whose breasts still ache from nursing her ungrateful children.

In the midst of this lovesickness are some of the most poignant words in scripture (11:8-9). 'I want to hate you, but I can't.' Why not? Those last words were my paraphrase. Here's the text: "for I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath." The footnote in my Bible says the meaning of that last word is uncertain. Maybe it means

**Maybe there will
be someone in your
summer congregation
who really believes
God is so mad at her
that God has given
up on her. She needs
to hear that's not so.**

hurt, or woundedness, or heartbreak, womb ache. Maybe it means murderous rage. Maybe all of the above.


God loves us because that's who God is. It has nothing to do with who we are, what we might become, or anything we can give back to God to prove we're worthy of love or know we

need forgiveness. We like to imagine God has a heart, maybe is a heart. We also have to admit we break that heart. Maybe it's permanently broken. Maybe that's who God is, too.

In this strange book God takes on the role of a partner who is treated worse than dirt, but won't break the covenant of marriage. God speaks like a parent who will not let go of her children, even if they won't return her calls or open her letters in the homes they've made far away from her.

How do we preach this? All those words about whores and whoredom might scare away summer visitors. I encourage preachers to give at least one sermon to Hosea. Talk about love and faithfulness. Talk about forgiveness. Talk about heartbreak, and hope that never dies, even when pain lives on with it.

Maybe there will be someone in your summer congregation who really believes God is so mad at her that God has given up on her. She needs to hear that's not so. Maybe someone will get the message that it's OK to hate what someone he loves has done, but he can go on loving with all the love he has left. Maybe someone will come, convinced by experience that God doesn't love at all, and hear about God's love in a new key. So tell the story.

The book of Hosea ends, in Chapter 14, with words of invitation and promise. God has every right, and all the right weapons, to punish and destroy the people. Instead, God speaks as a gardener, promising new life, beauty, and the fruit of faithfulness. God is done ranting, and just wants to work the soil. 

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe is
minister at Glenview, Toronto.*

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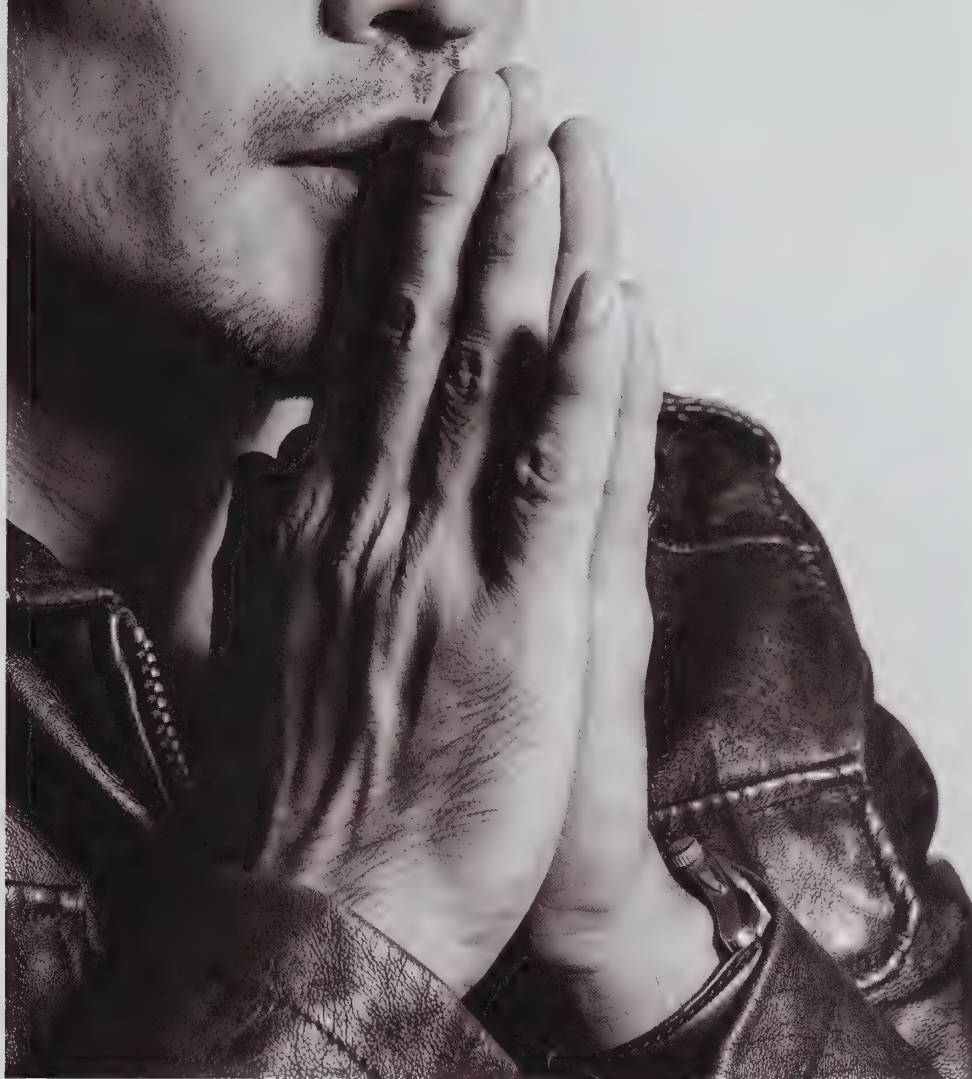
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RENEWAL

Some Assembly Required

As long as there is prayer. *by* **FRED STEWART**

As I sit here in Blind River, Ont., a Timmy's stop on the drive from Sault Ste. Marie to Pembroke, I find myself reflecting over the past few weeks. As some of you know, I am roadtripping around Ontario these days. As I visit congregations and ministers, I share encouragement from those who care, pray and give for the journey. This year, in the middle of the roadtrip, I got an all expense paid trip to General Assembly. I am telling you this so you can appreciate why General

Assembly was a bit of a blur this year.

Here then are some of the things that made an impression on me in spite of my road weariness. They are not in any particular order other than this is how they came to mind.

General Assembly is about community. Connecting with old friends and new is so much more than a cliché. I experienced much joy and shared such excitement with so many people in a short weekend of time. Ironically it had nothing to do with how much we agreed or disagreed on the issues currently >

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RENEWAL, continued

facing us as a denomination.

The Moderator matters. Douglas Rollwage set a tone in his manner, his deportment and especially his careful attention to prayer. One of the fruits of all this was the Young Adult Representatives' presentation at the end of assembly. It was completely focused on scripture and prayer. It's not that I haven't enjoyed the humorous presentations that normally take place. It is just how significant and moving this cohort's deep and personal prayers were.

Commissioners have a corporate personality and will. I have been to eight GAs in the past 14 years. Often there has been discussion about how 'different' or 'unique' a particular year is. This was no exception. In the questions on human sexuality before the court and the country, irrespective of their position, the court was set on keeping the process that has been put in place. They resisted both multiple efforts to accelerate and to slow down the eventual decision point, which seems destined to happen next assembly.

Introverts (I'm not one) and ADD/ADHD folks (I am one) pay a heavy price in experiencing General Assembly. There were many of us that returned to our homes planning on at least 24 hours of peace, quiet and rest.

Last, and certainly not least, in prayer times that I had the privilege to host, the theme of God's sovereignty surfaced many times. We can trust Him. He is faithful. Christ loves his Church more than we can even imagine. And that is why, I believe, the corporate anxiety was lower than last year. ☕

Rev. Fred Stewart is executive director of the Renewal Fellowship.
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SHARING WITNESS

Untimely Farewells

Broken by grief and loss.

by VIVIAN KETCHUM

THE THREE OF US WERE IN THE HOSPITAL ROOM.

My middle sister, Pauline and I were sitting around the bedside of our oldest sister, Barbie. There was heavy silence that hung in the air. It was the three of us. Together. Barbie was dying. She had cirrhosis of the liver and was in the late stages of the disease. We had gathered together to say our final goodbyes to each other.

Barbie drank most of her life to try escape her nightmares. It was her residential school past that haunted her. Tormented her even in her waking hours. So she drank to try to escape the horrors of her mind. She only shared the worst of that history with our sister, Pauline. I was the youngest in the family. Even now when we all had grey hair and families of our own, my older sisters were still protective of me and >

SHARING WITNESS, continued

wouldn't share their stories with me.

It felt comforting to be in the same room with my sisters. Despite the sad occasion that brought us together, we were still able to laugh and share fond memories of our children. It was when we looked into each other's eyes and saw that similar pain reflected back at us. Pain of our shared past. A dark shadow of our lost childhood. The laughter would die away and the heavy silence sat between us.

I was lost in my own thoughts. Feelings of anger were stirred up inside me. Angry at what the residential school had done to my sister. Angry at the church for stealing another loved one from me. My oldest sister. My protector from all things that were bad and scary.

Barbie, who was only in her mid-50s, was a mother and a grandmother. Learning always came to her so easily. She had so many gifts in her to share. Gifts that were not going to be shared with her loved ones.

She passed away a few weeks later.

**A mixture of grief and
anger in my tears.
Then I looked up to
see there were still stars
up in the fading light.
I imagined my sister's
spirit up amongst the
twinkling stars.**

I remember getting the dreaded phone call early in the morning. I went out to my back yard. I wept. A mixture of grief and anger in my tears. Then I looked up to see there were still stars up in the fading light. I imagined my sister's spirit up amongst the twinkling stars. Free from the inner pain that haunted her. My sister's beauty was amongst the stars.

My family began the process of saying the final goodbye to our loved one. We gathered together back on our home reserve.

My home community held a traditional wake for my sister. It was difficult to see my sister's grown children grieve over the loss of their mother. My three nephews, grown men. Tall and manly. Almost broken by their grief at the loss of their mother. My sister's grandchildren playing beside the coffin where their grandmother lay. Barbie's only daughter had made the final arrangements. No Christian burial; it was to be a full traditional burial. Barbie was going to be given back her dignity that was stolen in her childhood in her final farewell.

My sister was buried on our traditional land in our home community, next to family members that have passed on. I have lost an older brother and now my oldest sister. Siblings that have died too young and too soon. Alcoholism. Suicide. The legacy of the residential school was slowly robbing us of our family members.

Sadly the rest of my surviving siblings are in poor health. One brother is losing a battle with alcoholism. Lately I have been struggling with my own health issues. Bad food or not enough food as a child. Tuberculosis and other ailments are creating on-going health issues for all of us. All allegedly from our residential school experiences. There will be similar scenes where family members will gather by the bedside of a loved one.

Final goodbyes. Being said all too soon. ☙

Vivian Ketchum is Anishinabe of Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation, outside of Kenora, Ont. She lives in Winnipeg.

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REFORMATION

Sola Scriptura

Scripture forms and shapes lives. *by* **PETER BUSH**

A Parable: No one was certain why the Park family's dog was at the baseball game, but Rover was there. Rover, deciding to live up to his name, took a walk and ended up in the outfield. Turmoil ensued. Players yelled at Rover, the umpires yelled at Rover, people in the stands yelled at Rover. Confused and scared by the noise, Rover ran all over the field unsure of what to do. Suddenly Rover stopped, >

REFORMATION, continued

perked up his ears and headed straight to a woman on the third base side who was calling out “Rover, Rover.” With a yip of joy Rover leaped into Meaghan Park’s arms. Rover had heard a voice he knew and trusted.

Rev. Jennifer Cameron, in telling this story at the *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Alone) event held in October, drew the analogy: when people who have been formed by scripture hear the voice of God in the word they are drawn to it, knowing it to be their primary allegiance, the way to follow.

The *Sola Scriptura* gathering was part of two day event at Presbyterian College, Montreal. The previous day Dr. Edith Humphrey of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary spoke on “*Prima Scriptura*,” the primacy of scripture over tradition, reason and experience. The speakers at the gathering the following day spent little time defending the Bible as the word of God or addressing questions of inerrancy, debating points of an earlier time. Instead the invitation was to reflect on the ways scripture forms and shapes the lives of followers of Jesus both individually and as communities of faith.

Beginning with baptism, an unusual place to start a conversation about scripture, Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries of Presbyterian College demonstrated the ways scripture shapes the life of the believer. Describing three scenarios—a baptism in the early church, a contemporary baptism of an infant, and a contemporary adult baptism—De Vries showed baptism arises from allegiance to scripture. The individual or the parents, having been shaped by scripture, come to be baptized or bring their children to be baptized in allegiance to those same scriptures. Further, parents promise to nurture their children in a family (both at home and in the church)

Voices not often heard in the Presbyterian Church have, through these gatherings, been given contexts in which to speak. These unexpected voices demonstrate that thoughtful theological engagement is taking place in many places across the church.

informed by scripture and those baptized on their own profession of faith promise to continue allowing scripture to shape their lives.

The panel of Jason Zuidema (from Concordia University and pastor at Église Réformée St-Paul, Repentigny, Que.), Hillary Kaell (from Concordia University), Kaye Diviney (minister at St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal), and Sybil Mosley (at Livingstone, Montreal) deepened the understanding of what allegiance to scripture means in the contemporary context. Kaell, whose research explores modern “pilgrimage” to the Holy Land, noted that Christians who engage in daily personal Bible reading and attend small group Bible studies are far more likely to make a trip to the Holy Land than are those who do not. Engagement with the biblical material feeds a desire to see where the events described took place, giving a lived experience to the ongoing reading of scripture as “the Bible comes

alive” through visiting the Holy Land.

Zuidema, Diviney and Mosley recounted how scripture has shaped the life of the very different communities of faith in which they are involved, ranging from the multi-ethnic community at Livingstone, to the city church that is St. Andrew and St. Paul to the Francophone congregation at Église Réformée St-Paul. The scriptures’ ability to form faith communities crosses ethnic, linguistic and cultural lines.

The Scripture Alone conversation was the third of five gatherings taking place between 2013 and 2017, exploring “the five solas” of the Reformation. Voices not often heard in the Presbyterian Church have, through these gatherings, been given contexts in which to speak. These unexpected voices demonstrate that thoughtful theological engagement is taking place in many places across the church.

Sponsored by the Committee on History and funded through grants from the Ewart Endowment for Theological Education and the Conference Fund of the Life and Mission Agency, these events are preparation for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. The conversations seek to address the questions: What might “the five solas” say to the church in Canada? Are the 500 year-old slogans robust enough to be relevant today? The hope is that these conversations will continue through the study guides available at presbyterian.ca/history.

The Oct. 29 gathering in Winnipeg will explore the theme Christ Alone. The final gathering will take place at Knox College in 2017. +

Rev. Peter Bush is minister at Westwood, Winnipeg, and editor of Presbyterian History, a publication of the Committee on History.



VIEWPOINT

The View from the Mountain Top

A new climate for prayer. *by* ALLEN AICKEN

Jesus seemed to be aware that religion and politics must be kept separate. In his world, evil came from the power of the Roman Empire. Big Evil came when religion and the empire locked arms. Our role is to watch, to keep the powers from living a lie.

Earlier in this new century it was still argued that climate change may or may

not be happening. Neither a scientist nor a Christian church member can any longer say such a thing responsibly. And yet there are perspectives from which this shift of understanding can be seen. The mountain top is the biblical place, and the modern metaphor, of the spiritual experience.

Eli Wiesel's Jewish community began by denying that anything so painful as the Holo- ➤

VIEWPOINT, continued

caust could really be happening. Nobody could be so cruel as to annihilate children! And the denial was one factor that made it so much easier to slip it all under the radar.

There are two ugly factors in our denial. The one is that it is not we ourselves that will suffer from global warming but our grandchildren. The other is age-old and is as alive today as it was in Jesus' day. The poor will suffer first from climate change, while the rich will be able to dodge it for a while. Both factors should shake Christian sensors.

Together with the God who made us, and daily labours to save us, we must resolve this difficult threat. In the past the church has found ways to help the ailing creation. At other points in its story it has failed to do so. The created world needs our focus, our loving heart, and our

conviction that this world belongs to God. It does not belong to the empires that would enslave us. We must not waste our energies in squabbling but work together to bring in the empire of God.

The Church of Scotland's website is rewarding. Search for "Care for the Earth." In addition to the various studies and statements the church has made, there is an opportunity to register as an "eco-congregation." Registration does not demand past commitment but it encourages the congregation to outline where it plans to go in environmental leadership. The network is ecumenical in that congregations that do not belong to the denomination can join. Collectively they have found ways to explore and change the way the country cares for creation.

The mainline Presbyterian Church in the United States has a similar

approach. In addition to all the work it has done as a church, an arms-length group has sprung up: presbyearthcare.org. Congregations and individuals may sign up as members and they don't have to be a part of the denomination. (In my conversations with the moderator of this organization, I, of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, was invited to join.) I talked to a congregation just across the line from our home and was surprised at the economic and legislative change they had brought about.

Both these denominations acknowledge that their whole membership is unlikely to become engaged in participating in an enthusiastic way. And that's just the way it is in our postmodern, free-thinking society. Here are models, suitable to us in Canada, whereby we can band together with like-minded people for more effective work in the struggle to be faithful stewards of creation.

There is a cost to discipleship. In its opening gambits it can even be divisive, as Jesus warned. It is often wise to find a way to move forward that displays no offence or hatred toward those who see life differently. It may be necessary to have different teams working on a variety of issues, until life gets clearer. As both models have shown, it can be ecumenical. We could work with all stripes of Christians to bring in the Realm of God, God's Empire, the Kingdom.

Environmental theologians are calling us to be aware that there may be a very large implication of seeing the earth as God's garden, and we the gardeners. Either creation, all of it, will be saved, or we will all be destroyed. That's a shift! But so was Peter's sharing the gospel with Gentiles. ☩

Rev. Allen Aicken is interim minister at Grace, Calgary. This is the last of a three part series.



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MISSION

Church Without Walls

The Dale Ministries in deep inner city. *by* **BONNIE BELDAN-THOMSON**

I took the Bloor Street subway line west across the centre of Toronto, then went south by bus to Queen Street. I wasn't sure whether to go left or right to my destination, but the sidewalk was busy and a kindly young woman pointed me in the right direction.

Small restaurants offering great prices on ethnic food reminded me that this Parkdale neighbourhood is home to an exceptionally high number of immigrants including the largest Tibetan population of any place outside Asia and many Roma people from Eastern Europe.

On Dunn Avenue brick homes framed by

tall trees and groomed lawns, the epitome of gracious Victorian living, face off against a large high-rise apartment across the street. Bonar-Parkdale Presbyterian, built in 1897, has one foot in each world. This large structure is white brick with stained glass windows. But around the side, at the back, is Bonar-Parkdale Place, a low-rise providing non-profit housing for seniors. Between the two, connected to both, is the church hall where Dale Ministries holds its weekly drop-in and lunch.

The Dale Ministries congregation, originally called Parkdale Neighbourhood Church, met in a storefront, then in a >

MISSION, continued

basement. In 2012, without enough money to pay the rent, the decision was made to become a church without walls. At first they held services in a local park. Over time partnerships were forged with other community groups. Now drop-in events, meals, art opportunities, Bible study and worship take place in various locations. The lack of a permanent home has actually made the ministry more available to the community. People go to the venue closest to them, become connected, then join other events.

Dale Ministries is a registered charity governed by a board of directors and has recently become incorporated. The Dale receives a small grant from Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec, with whom they are in relationship, and have been written into the budgets of congregations from many denominations as well as organizations including the Meeting House and Warner Brothers. But their widest network of support is through individuals.

When I arrived at the Bonar-Parkdale fellowship hall at about 11 a.m., a few people were seated at tables that would later accommodate close to 150. I heard cheerful chatter from several people who were busy in the kitchen. Coffee and cookies had been set out at a table near the door.

I spoke intermittently with the two ministers but they were busy attending to the needs of their congregation. Joanna Moon, whose degree combined theology with community development, was in great demand to chat, advise and sign papers. Director Erinn Oxford spent most of her time in a far corner playing keyboard for a small band that was rehearsing for a concert in the park. As a student, she had two career choices, music or ministry. God found a way to combine them for her. When Erinn left the keyboard someone else sat down to play a vigorous stride

The lack of a permanent home has actually made the ministry more available to the community. People go to the venue closest to them, become connected, then join other events.

piano version of *You Are My Sunshine*. (At the Dale, first names are preferable.)

I sat beside Yolanda. She wanted to know where I lived and if rent was cheaper there. When Greta joined us she wanted to know if I had eaten breakfast that morning. Then she wondered what I'd had. After I talked about sharing peanut butter toast with my grandchildren, she told me with satisfaction that she also had breakfast that day. An apple. She asked where I lived, what rent cost there and how I got to the drop-in. When I explained my travel, she made a connection and said in awe: "You have a car?"

The room was full when lunch was served at noon—salad and potatoes on big platters and chicken breasts placed on our plates. I saw that Greta didn't eat. I asked if she wasn't hungry. She told me she didn't need to eat because she had breakfast that morning. Then she reached under the table and brought out plastic containers which she filled with the food from her plate. I wondered how many meals she would make from this lunch.


After Erinn offered a blessing, before we received food, Souad Sharabani came from the kitchen to welcome guests and explain the menu. She sounded like a chef addressing delegates at a high level conference. The food matched her introduction: tasty and nourishing. Better than a high level conference!

Souad is one example of the diversity and spirit of the Dale. She was born

in Iran, and grew up in Israel, speaks five languages and had a career traveling the world as a radio documentary producer. In her cookbook, *Scents of Memory*, Souad shares memories and stories related to her no-fuss, easy-on-the-budget recipes. She lives in the neighbourhood and has spent many years serving up good food there as her contribution to the Dale. In times past, when money was very scarce, she prepared healthy meals of lentils and rice for 60-80 people at a cost of \$40-\$60.

Souad's work is easier now because she gets food from Second Harvest. This organization, which has some early Presbyterian connections, gathers food from many donors including food retailers, restaurants and caterers. They redirect this food to 220 social service groups of which the Dale is one.

Both Erinn and Joanna emphasize that the Dale ministry is not a charity where some people give and others receive. It is a place for developing personal relationships and belonging. Although many people in Parkdale have lost connections with their previous lives and have reasons to feel isolated, the Dale welcomes everyone to full participation because, as Joanna explains: "Each of us has both brokenness and gifts; we live and share this together."

For more information check out thedale.org 

Bonnie Beldan-Thomson is a member of Malvern, Scarborough, Ont.

A Polarizing Figure

John Knox, one of the fathers of Canadian Presbyterianism.

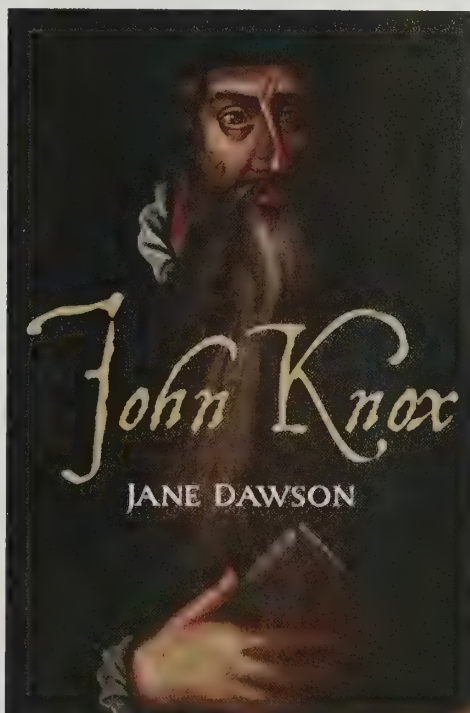
by **STUART MACDONALD**

While most people don't know a great deal about John Knox, they do have an opinion on him.

Knox is a polarizing person, either loathed or loved. This makes him a very difficult subject for a biographer. Thankfully, Jane Dawson is more than up to this task. Her recent biography does a superb job of bringing Knox to life, as well as explaining the crucial role he played in both the Scottish and English reformations.

This biography has two advantages over previous attempts to chronicle the life of Scotland's most famous reformer. The first is the result of the discovery of new archival material, including letters from Knox, and the Bible presented to Knox by English friends circa 1567. These discoveries have helped illuminate previously murky chapters in his life. Second, Dawson has been able to draw on the rich scholarship on the Scottish reformation over the last three decades, a field to which she has been a major contributor. It is now possible to more effectively place Knox within the Scottish context.

The biography begins in Geneva in May 1557 at the baptism of Knox's son. Knox is a joyous, emotional father. At the same time, we discover the actual form of the liturgy used to baptize this child was a passionate concern for Knox. The service was to have none of the vestiges of older baptismal services but was to be (in Knox and his fellow reformers'



John Knox by Jane Dawson
New Haven and London:
Yale University Press, 2015

belief) precisely what God intended: what the Bible said should be there with nothing added which the Bible did not expressly command. In this one scene we get so many of the crucial themes of the biography: Knox as a person, Knox's understanding of how scripture should be interpreted, Knox's determination that worship be purified, and the experience of exile.

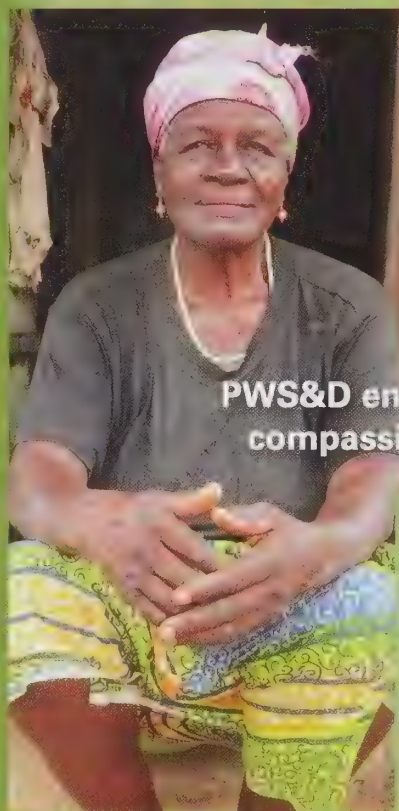
What emerges is a complex man. Knox made friends, including developing warm friendships with women, and had two happy marriages. He had a loyalty to the country where he was born, but also felt profound loyalty to England, his adopted country where he served as a priest and preacher during the reign of Edward VI.

Knox, though born in Scotland, was one of the English exiles during the reign of Queen Mary I who found themselves scattered across the European continent. His time in Frankfurt and the bitter

divisions created by Knox's insistence on a purified liturgy was a crucial chapter in his life. Knox was exiled from this community and found himself in Geneva. It was within the English exiles in Geneva that Knox found a home, comradeship, and where he was part of a community that together created some of the most foundational developments for the English-speaking reformed community, including the Geneva Bible and the *Forme of Prayers*.

Knox's strong opinions and his opposition to Mary I led him to write probably his most (in)famous tract, *The First* >

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BOOK REVIEW, continued

Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women. Jane Dawson places this tract in context, helping us to understand not only the text and how polarizing it was at the time but also its consequences. Knox had alienated England's new queen, Elizabeth I, and he was persona non grata in her realm.

He thus found himself in Scotland, working with the Protestant nobility. Their unlikely success in the years 1559-1560 led to the Reformation Parliament of 1560, and the creation of a reformed church in Scotland, but Knox was to be blocked by Elizabeth I from England and a planned mission to Ireland. While Elizabeth I may have kept Knox himself out of England, his ideas and those of his fellow Genevan exiles were foundational for the English Puritan movement.

In Scotland, Knox found the compromises made by other reformers unpalatable. His final years were spent preaching, but unable to create the pure church in Scotland that he had imagined.

This biography helps us to understand how important John Knox was, as well as helping us to understand that the movement for reformation in Scotland went far beyond one man. Whether one feels differently about Knox after completing it remains an open question, but one will understand him far more and understand his importance. One will also come away realizing something else. While Knox is one of our ancestors as Canadian Presbyterians, he is not our only ancestor. How we understand the Christian faith is vastly different from how he did. We celebrate Christmas. Knox would tell us: "Don't—it's not in the Bible." ☛

Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald is professor of church and society at Knox College, Toronto.

Focus

Stories of mission, ministry and community



CHURCH PLANTING

Supple, Flexible, Open

God is re-forming church.

by TIM ARCHIBALD

“YOU’RE DOING WHAT?” she asked me with puzzlement.

“I’m going to be a church planter in Nova Scotia,” I replied.

“Why in the world would we need another church?” Gina asked. “Don’t we have enough of them that are mostly empty already?”

This young adult Presbyterian had a great question—one that still bears answering 20 years later. So why must the Presbyterian Church in Canada invest extravagantly in church planting?

There’s a new expression of church springing up practically everywhere these days and it’s making a significant mark on the ecclesial landscape. Something remarkable is afoot—God is doing a new thing. A 2010 report by the Church of Scotland suggests that the emergence of such new communities “has every appearance of being one of the most significant missional movements in the >

CHURCH PLANTING, continued

recent history of Christianity.”

Why new churches? Because these brand new worshipping communities largely serve those who are outside the existing church. They are a response to extreme changes in our society and to our new missional context where most people have increasingly little to no Christian background. New worshipping communities are springing up in coffee shops, in pubs, in community spaces, even in private homes—the forms are endless—as they attempt to engage those who find the existing church culturally alien and unable to speak to them. These are experiments in a new way of being church at a time when regular church has lost its draw for most in our culture.

In a period of such extreme social change, these new church plants are supple, flexible, open and adaptable in a way that established churches with long-standing traditions find... well... hard and difficult. Investing in new church plants is like investing in experimental greenhouses for a future whose shape we still don't know: God is reforming church.

In 2012 the Presbyterian Church (USA) stepped out and invested in a movement to develop 1,001 brand new worshipping communities over a 10-year-period, with the goal of reaching the unchurched and de-churched for Christ. Already they've had about 400 new starts. Now this is courageous work for a church planter—to start a church from scratch. Where would you begin? Who do you turn to for support? It's potentially very isolating work that you can't possibly succeed in alone. So the PC(USA) developed a network of church planting coaches—people specially trained to meet monthly by Skype with the church planter pastor to offer companionship, encouragement, and a listening ear. Coaches ask great

“But you will hit the wall. You will have anxiety that you haven't faced before. You will feel alone. You will want to give up.”


questions that help church planters discover their gifts, deepen their spiritual leadership and discern the way forward when they get stuck. They coach for the success of the mission, not merely as life-coaches to the individual.

Did you know that for some years now the PCC, in partnership with the PC(USA), has been training church planting coaches for our Canadian context? A team of five fully trained coaches from across the country are ready to go, all with personal experience in church planting or congregational re-development. Sherif Garas coaches a new Arabic congregation in Winnipeg; Matt Brough coached a house church in Halifax; Dianne Ollerenshaw uses coaching in her work as a synod staff person in Alberta and the Northwest; Heather Malnick coaches a neighbouring congregation toward redevelopment in Barrie presbytery; and I am coaching the new start at Heritage Green in Hamilton. Some wonderful things are taking shape.

Have you ever left a conversation with new clarity, insight, and courage? That's the kind of feeling you get with a great coach. Coaching offers balcony-time—an opportunity to step out for an hour and see things from a different perspective. It helps you find focus, eliminate distractions and even swim

upstream when necessary in order to keep moving the ministry forward. Once a year coaches travel to the new ministry in person to do a site visit and also speak with presbytery representatives. Coaches don't have all the answers—but we do offer friendship and a space where hard questions can be struggled through together—with prayer, and an openness to Spirit's leading and God's will. PC(USA) research has shown that coaching significantly increases the success rate of these new starts. Therefore in their system all advanced grants require a coach.

One church planter writes about his coaching experience: “You think you know what you are doing, but actually you don't. You might have all kinds of theological training, ministry experience and all the best ideas. You might have read all the books. But you will hit the wall. You will have anxiety that you haven't faced before. You will feel alone. You will want to give up. You won't know whether to do this or do that and there will be no one to tell you. A coach doesn't tell you exactly what to do, but they listen and help you figure it out. They've been there too.”

So what do you say? Is God calling your presbytery to be a greenhouse site for one of these experimental new worshipping communities? Might God even be calling you to step up, to start praying and start a conversation? Or maybe God has already been nudging you toward being a church planter? Then we would love to hear from you! For as we see again and again, truly nothing will be impossible for the living God. 

Rev. Dr. Tim Archibald is minister at Kings, New Minas, N.S. To learn more about church planting and coaching please contact Canadian Ministries—jdecombe@presbyterian.ca.



BE CHURCH

Big Ministry, Small Budget

Getting involved with the community. *by* JOEL COPPIETERS

WHEN THE ENGINE of our second car almost literally blew up after midnight in the middle of a November snowstorm, I didn't immediately recognize it as the most significant thing God had done to kick-start our ministry at Côte des Neiges, Montreal. I had left the manse in a light jacket a few hours earlier for a distress call from a hospital's palliative care department. Walking home that night I realized I would have to start taking public transit to the church from then on, since my wife needed her car to get to work.

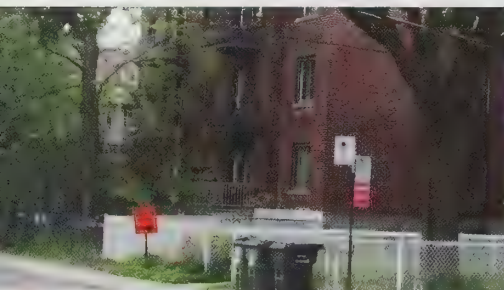
Looking back I realize we had already begun some of the groundwork, and had done some of the theoretical work, that would develop into the mission the church has since been doing. Côte des Neiges is in a neighbourhood of new immigrants, the working poor, struggling students and fixed pension seniors. We knew that already, in theory.

A course I had taken at Presbyterian College for my Master of Divinity degree had taught me how to do a community exegesis and map out the stats for the area surrounding the church. We did a thorough analysis of

the census data. I read all the local papers. We obtained a listing of the local community groups and tracked their efforts on the web and in the news. I had been attending the city council meetings every month where I heard the concerns expressed firsthand by citizens and community organizers.

But it wasn't until I had to stand at the bus stop and walk through the neighbourhood that all the statistics were brought into much clearer focus. You just hear and see and feel things on foot that you don't pick up from the window of a speeding car. The 800 illegal apartments without running water in your immediate vicinity is just a cold fact, until you've seen one from the inside. The startling fact that there are 8,354 children under the age of 12 living below the sub-poverty line within 15 minutes of your church doesn't become an unacceptable reality until you make a food basket delivery to a cramped one room apartment and you see the worn, narrow mattress that a single mom will share that night with a newborn and two elementary school children. ➤

BE CHURCH, continued



Some apartments in the neighbourhood and the author at work.

At the city council meetings, the mayor and several of the councillors and I now greet each other by first names, or with a nod to “the Reverend.” We have connected with nearby non-profits, standing with them, often defending their interests and making their needs known. We have taken public stands on challenging questions about poverty, social housing, seniors’ rights, better schools. Interestingly, there is an ongoing sense of surprise from non-church folk that I am not there to push for zoning changes or better parking for the church. The four hours I spend at the city council meetings each month and the few hours spent doing research beforehand have been one my best time investments. In many of these efforts, the way had been paved by church members who were already active as board members and volunteers for a variety of community organizations we now seek to partner with.

As we got to know our community, and the various other organizations responding to the needs, it wasn’t long

before we got a sense of several ways to help. We can’t singlehandedly take on the long-term support of a refugee family, but our small size means that we can respond with targeted help more quickly than anybody else. When a family with children stepped forward with a critical need for food, even the most efficient local clinic would take 48 hours to respond. I can be at their door in less than an hour with a selection of donated non-perishables to which I add some milk, fresh fruits, veggies and assorted essentials like diapers and formula. This ongoing outreach ministry, and the help we provide to struggling families within our congregation, is funded by our members and two other neighbourhood churches that donate non-perishable items, as well as cash contributions earmarked in our offerings. I also funnel back any honoraria I receive from officiating at weddings and funerals.

As the church gets better known in the community, more and more people drop in during the week. Sometimes it’s a homeless person looking for bus fare or a sandwich and we are ready for that. With four hospitals and several clinics in our immediate vicinity, many of the people I meet at the bus stops are either patients or staff and it is not unusual

that a brief conversation on a bus leads to a quick visit at the church for a word of prayer after a tough appointment or a difficult work shift.

None of the efforts I have described are tremendously costly, but most of them do require sacrifice from the congregation. The fact that our building is not used as a profit centre means we have to find other ways to balance our budget. We are frugal wherever possible, using volunteers in many roles from secretarial work to grounds keeping. Many of these come with a positive trade off however. Using volunteer musicians and choristers from within the congregation means that the people who lead us in worship are active participants in the life of the community who understand the process and are growing with us. We might not be ready for Carnegie Hall, but we are a genuinely worshipping community.

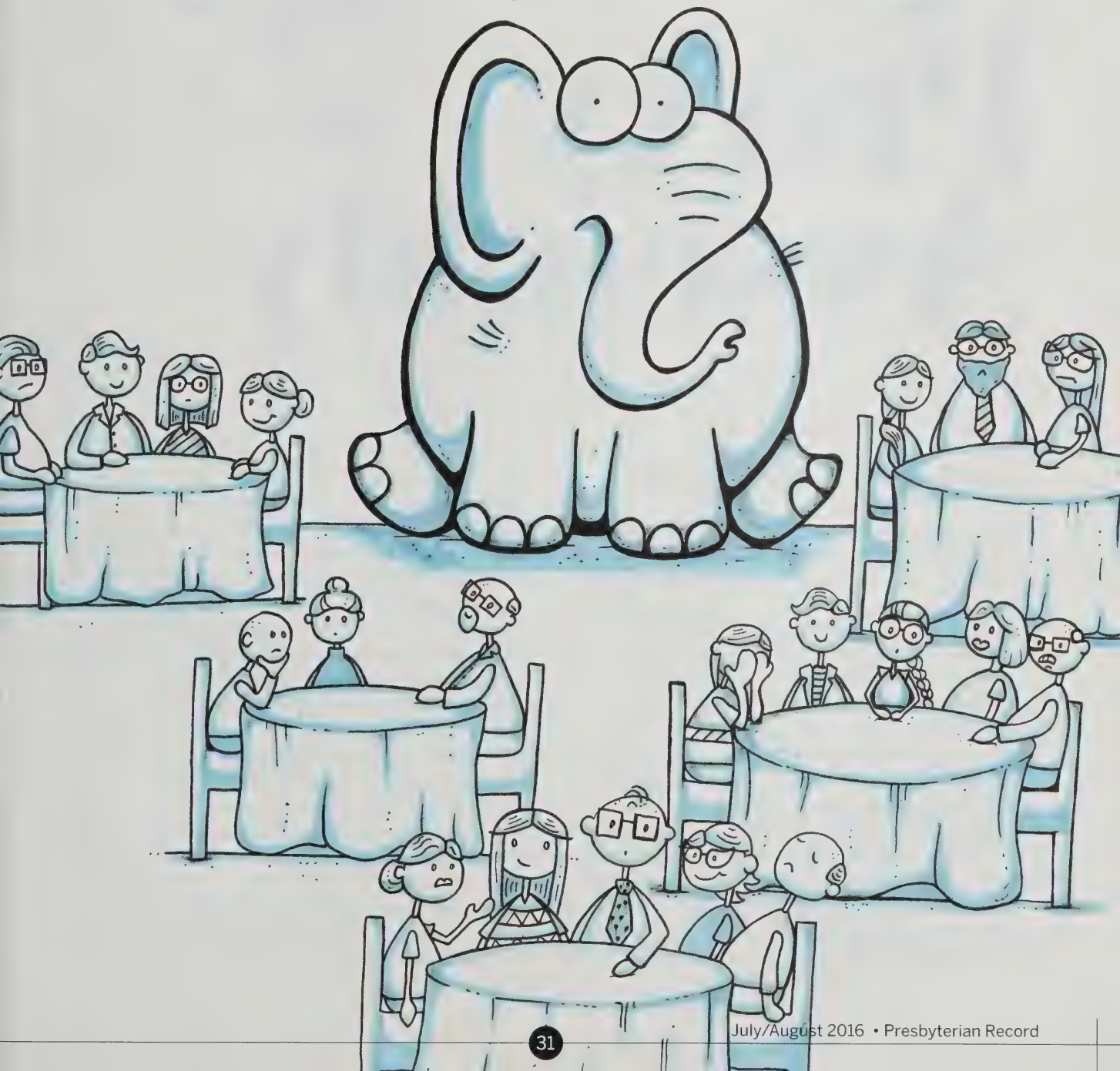
We are not a wealthy church and we serve in what has now become Montreal’s most indigent borough. Three of Canada’s 10 poorest postal code zones are within walking distance of our front door. Our congregation is composed of new immigrants, students, seniors and young families establishing themselves financially. And yet, the bulk of the cost of our ministry is covered each year by the offerings, with a little help from a modest endowment. No bazaars, bake sales or rental cheques. Once you’ve let God lead you out of your comfort zone and your guard is down, God confronts you with needs so real that it becomes personal... and it’s just impossible not to respond with all you’ve got. +

Rev. Joel Coppieters has served as minister at Côte des Neiges since 2012 when he graduated from Presbyterian College, Montreal.

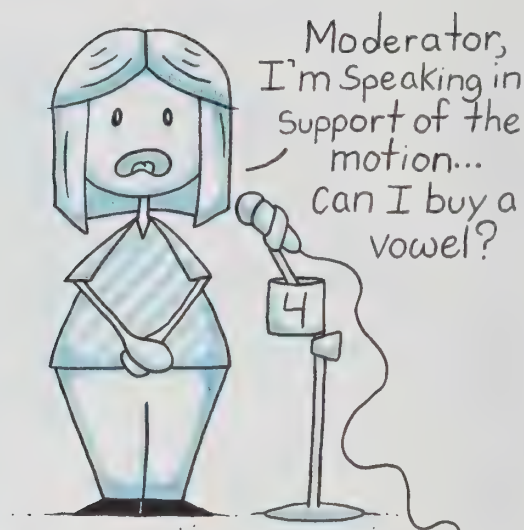
The 2016 General Assembly

142nd General Assembly
June 3-6, 2016

illustrations by SUSAN MATTINSON



A Proxy Assembly



A lot of sound and fury, signifying something.

It was an itchy assembly. Lots of scratching; little relief.

One commissioner said it was “sound and fury, signifying nothing.” Another called it “confusing.” Several wondered if anything had “actually happened.” The most common word used, in a casual poll done over meals and the long walks from the residence to the assembly hall, was “proxy.”

Proxy—overtures, motions, amendments, amendments to amendments, challenges to the moderator’s decisions, close votes and standing counts, all about something other than the actual thing being debated.

For example, a motion to defer a decision on an overture about what to do if a congregation wants to leave the denomination, which in itself was asking for a decision before other decisions had been made, was decided by a standing vote; that is, votes had to be manually counted because it was too close to call when commissioners raised their voting cards.

Edge-of-the-seat drama to determine exactly at what snail-speed the church must seek an answer. An answer to whether ordination and marriage for LGBT persons is doctrinally

acceptable within the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

There were a few direct attempts at The Issue, which fizzled, but not without tense standoffs. Many debates were related in some way, directly or indirectly, dependent on one’s point of view. They were signs of cracks in the denomination along one issue.

In another example, a recommendation—“That all courts of the church be urged to deal with people in same-sex relationships with tender pastoral care”—went through multiple sederunts and a standing vote and ended up as: “That all courts of the church be required to deal with all people with tender pastoral care.” A lot of sound and fury, but not necessarily about nothing. It was about something.

Step away from the issue of human sexuality and there was good news, mostly—new churches built and planted, lots of great missions, lots and lots of hardworking servants in the vineyard, dynamic partnerships with churches and organizations around the world. Sliding membership demographics, of course, with tough budgetary decisions, including the *Record*’s own report, and the solvency shortfall in the pension plan,

which were dealt with efficiently and with graciousness. Signs of a Christ-centred church meeting the challenges of the age faithfully, maybe even with confidence.

There are hundreds of photographs from the 142nd General Assembly, held at York University, Toronto, online at presbyterianrecord.ca. There are live blog updates from each sederunt. Highlights are presented in later pages of this issue.

For now, however, as a means of reporting on the events within the PCC in early June, here are a couple of prayers as a sign of what we do best in our denomination. —Andrew Faiz

Moderator's Prayer, June 6:

*Father, we bring ourselves, our assembly,
our congregations, our denomination, to you.*

*We confess, Father, that we tend to wander;
we lose our focus; so much gets in the way.*

*And so, Father, perhaps we might better pray:
bring ourselves, our assembly, our congregations,
our denomination, back to you.*

*When how we do church gets in the way of what we need to see,
to understand, to do, bring us back to you.*

*When we get caught up with the trivialities and business
and upsets and slights of our own experience of church,
bring us back to you.*

*When the meetings and the budgets and the disputes
and complaints discourage us,
bring us back to you.*

*When the issues and the pressures and
the frustrations and demands overwhelm us,
bring us back to you.*

*When we lose focus, when it all stops making sense,
bring us back to you.*

*Bring us back to the foundation, the cornerstone,
the bedrock of our faith.*

*The Rock we call Jesus, and what he did for us,
for all the hurting world, the world which you so love.*

*May we always, ever, and primarily proclaim
the astonishing, timeless, undeniable truth
that Jesus Christ, your Son, died for all humanity,
paying the price for our sins,*

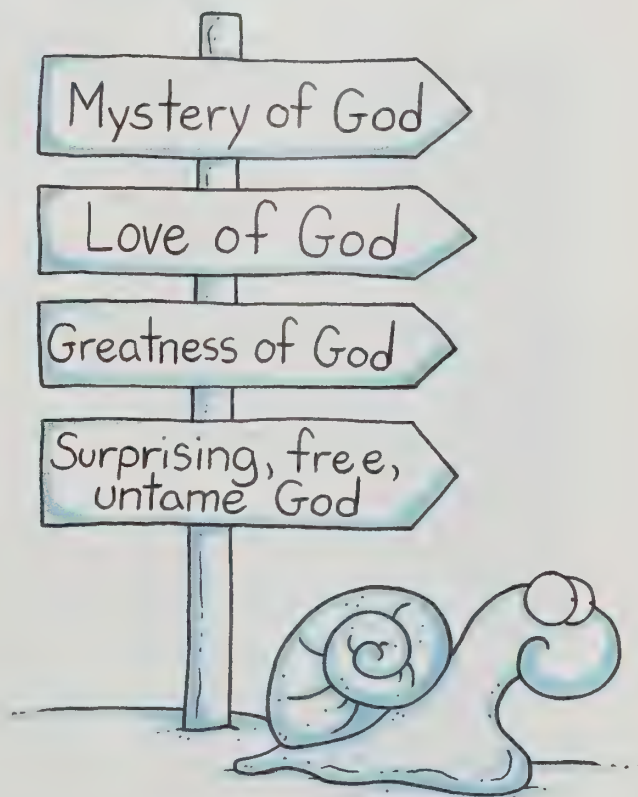
*bringing us forgiveness and peace,
peace with one another and with you.*

*That's the story, Father. That's what matters.
That's the Rock upon which Jesus builds his church.*

*And so, Father, we bring ourselves—
no, Father—we give ourselves, our assembly,
our congregations, our denomination, back to you.*

Use us for your good will we pray. Amen.

—Rev. Douglas Rollwage





Mysteries of God, Morning Worship, June 6:

*As we prepare to leave this place,
how can we be good stewards of the mysteries of
God in our faith and in our churches?*

*There are many ways,
and I think we could come up with many more.
But here are a few ways to get us started thinking:*

*Remind each other, often,
that God is God and we are not.*

*God has been called the mysterium tremendum—
the overwhelming mystery.*

*Even when this seems a little frightening,
it is our faith that allows us to trust in the goodness
and love of this overwhelming mystery.*

*Recognize that God is often at that place
where words stop and cannot go any further.*

Honour that place. Seek it out.

Invite wonder.

Become comfortable with ambiguity.

*Let some things be and stay
unexplainable and unknowable
and beyond experience in a way that evokes
reverence and awe.*

*Remember that honouring the mysteries of God
is the only way that resurrection happens ...
it is the impossible possibility.*

Be a witness.

*Point to the love of God—
point to the greatness of God—
point to the surprising, free,
untame God and invite people into a deeper trust.*

*And if we are to be trustworthy stewards
of the mysteries of God,
we must be people of prayer ...
who seek to know God's nature through
listening for God's voice.*

*Generous God, Name above all names,
you are beyond all praising;
beyond all description;
you exhaust all our language;
we come to the end,
we are still with you and you are still more.*

And so we listen.

*We listen for you to reveal yourself
to us once again.*

*We pray to perceive the new thing
that you are doing among us.*

*We clear more space in our hearts
to experience your love.*

God of mystery, we give thanks.

—Rev. Dr. Emily Bisset 

*Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.
Rev. Douglas Rollwage is minister at Zion,
Charlottetown. Rev. Dr. Emily Bisset is
minister at Calvin, Toronto.*





Rev. Steve Filyk from Kerrisdale, B.C., fuelling up.



Dana and Douglas Rollwage

Photo Album



"Ask Terrie-Lee" is probably the most often used phrase at General Assembly. Terrie-Lee Hamilton of the General Assembly Office is the go-to person for months before, during every moment of, and well after, each assembly.

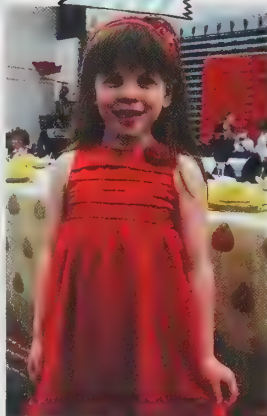


The last time Mona Harris and Caleb Kim met was a decade back when she was a lot taller by comparison. That was when Kim's dad, Rev. Caleb Kim Sr. (now at Fenelon Falls, Ont.) was a student minister at Harris' home church in Campbellton, N.B.



Rev. Mark McLennan from Knox, Woodstock, Ont., and Susan McLennan, president of the Women's Missionary Society, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

GA Mascot: Rachel, nearly six, has been present at the last seven assemblies thanks (if that's the word) to her two minister parents, Rev. Dr. Emily Bisset and Rev. Alex Bisset.



Letting their hair down: Nathan Sharpe, Young Adult Representative from Windsor, Ont., and Rev. Robert Murray from the unique Pinawa Christian Fellowship in Manitoba.



GA Family Time: Megan Robertson, Young Adult Representative, and Rev. Meridyth Robertson, commissioner from First, Trail, B.C. (Megan's parents are co-ministers, which makes her a double PK.)

Sartorial Styles: Rev. Keith McKee from St. George's, London, Ont., and Rev. Deb Rapport from Arise Ministries, Toronto, stand out in blacks and yellows. Meanwhile, Rev. Shannon Bell-Wyminga, Cariboo Ministries, B.C., was more comfortable being shoeless.

General Assembly: Business in Brief

Commissioners at the 142nd General Assembly considered more than 400 pages of reports and recommendations. Here are just a few of the items of business tackled by the highest court of the church. You can find almost all of the recommendations listed on our website, along with daily live blogs from the assembly floor.

A Strategic Plan

The assembly adopted a strategic plan prepared by the Assembly Council that has been five years in the making. Rev. Bob Smith, the council's convenor, said he hoped the plan will be "a living document" and will be improved over time as it is used by the various committees and courts of the church.

The plan outlines a series of methods and objectives, and sets three goals to be provided by the national church: "visionary leadership," "empowering resources that are relevant, contextual and missional" and "relational connections that incarnate Christ's mission at the local and international level."

Three related motions were also approved by the court: "That the Assembly Council monitor/oversee the implementation of the Strategic Plan," that "in their reports to General Assembly, all standing committees, college boards and agencies state how their work is implementing the

Strategic Plan," and that "presbyteries and congregations be encouraged to implement the Strategic Plan within their locales providing feedback as needed, and be prepared to share their experiences with the Assembly Council in three years."

New Chief Financial Officer

Oliver Ng was appointed the denomination's Chief Financial Officer effective July 31. Ng is a certified professional accountant and certified management accountant, and served for 11 years as director of finance for Scott Mission in Toronto. He also sits on the pension board of the Canadian Council of Christian Charities.

"I accept this position with great excitement. It is a great privilege and an honour to take on this role and I will do it with the best of my abilities," Ng told the court.

Stephen Roche, who has served as the church's CFO for 13 years, was honoured with a minute of appreciation followed by a standing ovation from the assembly. He will be retiring this summer.

Staying 'Central'

The General Assembly agreed its annual meetings should "normally be held within the geographical region of Hamilton, the Greater Toronto Area and Waterloo," but chose to maintain the practice of holding assemblies in the east or west of the country every five years.

Funds for the Pension Plan

As of September 30, half of the assets from dissolved congregations will go to the pension solvency fund up to a maximum of \$2 million, and the remaining 50 per cent will be "returned to the presbytery for mission work in their midst and beyond," the assembly decided.

For several years actuarial valuations of the church's defined-benefit pension plan have showed a shortfall in solvency funding, meaning that if the church went bankrupt there would not be enough money in the fund to fulfil its obligations to current and future members. The deficit has been, and must continue to be, funded through special payments.

"In 2016 the additional special payments are approximately \$708,000 or \$59,000 per month," the Pension and Benefits Board noted in their report.

At present, 25 per cent of the assets of dissolved congregations goes to the pension solvency fund, 52.5 per cent is returned to the presbytery for mission work and 22.5 per cent is transferred to the New Church Capital Fund.

Once \$2 million has been contributed under the formula approved at assembly this year, 70 per cent of the assets going forward will be returned to the presbytery and 30 per cent will go to the New Church Capital Fund.

More Time for Thought

Both the Committee on Church Doctrine and Justice Ministries, a department of the Life and Mission Agency, received more time to respond to the many



We celebrate those who have served our church longer than some of our Commissioners have been alive.

overtures on human sexuality that have been referred to them.

The Legalities of Leaving

In their report the clerks of assembly responded to four overtures that asked for a way for a congregation to leave the denomination with its building and assets intact if its members disagree with the church's course on a doctrinal issue.

In short, there is no legal way for a congregation to leave with its assets, the clerks concluded following extensive consultations.

Under federal and provincial law (in the 1939 Act to Incorporate The Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada), all lands, buildings, bank accounts and other assets revert to the Trustee Board of the Presbyterian Church in Canada when a congregation is dissolved by its presbytery, and the board

has a fiduciary responsibility to realize those assets for the benefit of the PCC.

Should a majority of congregants and the minister formally leave the denomination to start a new worshiping community, it is possible for them to purchase their former building at market value since "Trustee Board normally gives priority to other Christian churches in offering church properties for sale," the clerks noted.

E.H. Johnson Award Winner

This year's E.H. Johnson award for cutting-edge mission was presented to Dr. Bernard Sabella, executive secretary of the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees in Jerusalem.

"The award is not to my person but to all those who have worked diligently over the years with Palestinian and now with Syrian refugees," Sabella said in his remarks to the assembly.

He spoke of some of the difficulties experienced by Palestinians, including the difficulties youth face finding jobs, and the economic limits placed on the Palestinian economy.

"Much needs to be done by churches and faith-based organizations to bring peace forward not only between Palestinians and Israelis but between

faith groups," he said. We can "make faith-based justice possible."

More Items of Note:

- The Committee on Church Doctrine presented two documents for use in the church. One focuses on Presbyterian polity and its meaning for today, and the other explores how to interpret the Bible. Both were "commended to the courts" and the committee welcomes feedback.
- Assembly Council will be gradually reducing its membership from 40 people to 25 people.
- A revised section of the Book of Forms dealing with records and archives management was approved.
- In its report and recommendations, the International Affairs committee focused on xenophobia and discrimination against ethnic Koreans in Japan, Haitians in the Dominican Republic, the Roma in Hungary, indigenous peoples in Guatemala, and LGBT people around the world. It also expressed concerns about Canada's sale of military equipment to Saudi Arabia, levels of overseas development assistance, and the impact of the Marlin mine in Guatemala. Congregations are "encouraged to

review the Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2030) as a means of evaluating the conduct of Canadian development priorities."

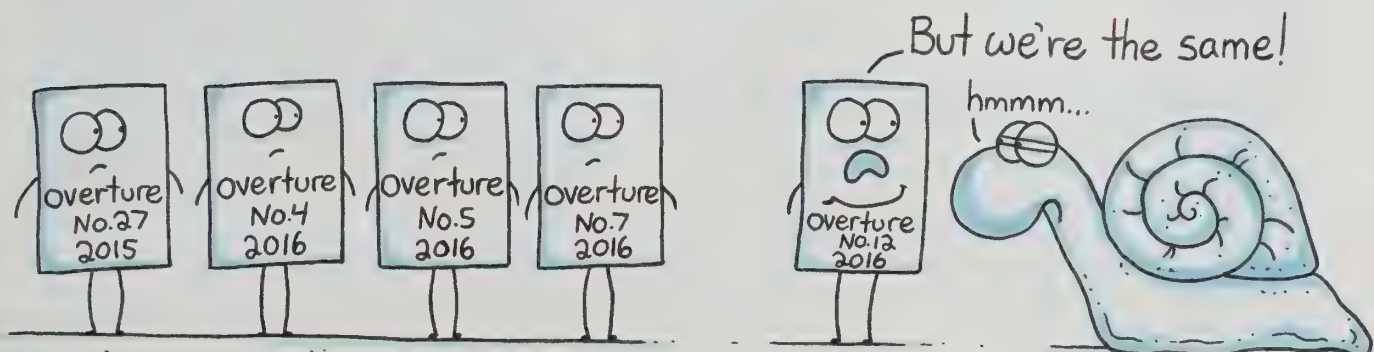
- Justice Ministries called for congregations and presbyteries to study the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to explore how they could respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, and encouraged them to acknowledge the traditional territories on which they meet.
- In its report, the Presbyterian College, Montreal, included a memorandum of understanding the Montreal School of Theology has signed with McGill University. It will transition the Faculty of Theology into a School of Religious Studies within the Faculty of Arts.
- The assembly approved two recommendations from Presbyterian Record Inc. One urged the officers and committees of the church "to assist Presbyterian Record Inc. to obtain a minimum of \$50,000 funding ... in the hope this would be matched by donors" and the second asked "that the ministry of the *Presbyterian Record* be commended to the courts of the church with the request that those courts discuss the financial

situation of the *Record* and seek ways to assist the *Record* financially in the coming year."

- Four guests addressed the assembly over the course of its meeting: Canon Dr. Alyson Barnett-Cowan, president of the Canadian Council of Churches; Dr. Gerald Filson, director of public affairs for the Baha'i Community of Canada; Rt. Rev. Bela Kato, bishop of the Transylvanian District of the Reformed Church in Romania; and Rev. Tibor Kiss, counsellor with the Reformed Church's Department of International Relations. Rev. Jerry Pillay, president of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, was not able to attend in person but sent his greetings.
- The three student representatives, Lisa Dolson from Knox College, Toronto, Katie MacIntosh from Presbyterian College, Montreal, and Shelly Chandler from the Vancouver School of Theology, extended their thanks for the opportunity to participate in the assembly. "I've heard talk of: declining membership, financial concerns, discussions on topics that could be divisive, talk of churches leaving the denomination, talk of closing churches and where the proceeds from the sales of said

churches will go," Chandler said in her report. "Welcome to the church! Welcome to ministry! It's actually enough to have a seminary student seriously reconsider her calling." Yet, she concluded, "I believe, based on what I've heard at this 142nd General Assembly, that the PCC is being called to re-imagine our collective calling. And as such, I fully believe that we are entering a very exciting time in our ministry. We have been scattered across Canada to witness to Christ by fully engaging in the life of the communities in which we are located."

- The Young Adult Representatives delivered their report to the assembly as a prayer. "God, we come to you with our fears and our worries, but we also come to you with our hopes for the future," they prayed. "We know that you, and you alone, are guiding us and comforting us as we struggle through these times of uncertainty. We pray that the decisions we make are grounded in your word and guided by your Spirit. We pray that our diversity and opinions will strengthen our church to stand together as brothers and sisters in Christ." 🍷 —Connie Wardle



FROM THE MODERATOR

On Pilgrimage

To the Rock we call Jesus. *by* DOUGLAS ROLLWAGE

THIS YEAR AS MODERATOR promises to be a pilgrimage of sorts for me. From my own congregation of Zion, Charlottetown, throughout the congregations, colleges and missions which comprise the Presbyterian Church in Canada, I hope to be visiting and learning from you.

My favourite place to bring people on pilgrimage is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City. To our Protestant eyes, there isn't much recognizable ground. We are greeted right away by a murky darkness in sharp contrast to the bright Jerusalem day, broken only by dripping candles and smoky lanterns. We make our way up a winding marble stairway, down a mosaic-laden passageway, around a corner, and then our eyes resolve the massive icon of the crucifix itself, the bleeding body and harrowed face of Jesus, startlingly exposed amid the decorations of silver and gold, a crown of glory incongruous against his own crown of thorns. Add to this the crowds and the cameras and the incense and the chanting and the kneeling and the kissing of the altar, and you've got a scene as unlike our image of what was, what should be, what needs to be, as could possibly be.

So why bring you there at all? Because on either side of the spot where people kneel and pray at the altar, visible through transparent panels, is the very top of the unquarried spur of limestone which makes up the hill that was called, way back in the days of Jesus, Golgotha.




What matters is that
rock, the Rock of our
Faith: the astonishing,
timeless, undeniable
truth that Jesus Christ,
the Son of God, died for
you and for me, paying
the price for our sins,
and bringing us
forgiveness and peace

And what I tell my dazzled and overwhelmed pilgrims is this: Forget everything else. What matters is that rock, the Rock of our Faith: the astonishing, timeless, undeniable truth that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for you and for me, paying the price for

our sins, and bringing us forgiveness and peace, forgiveness of one another, peace with one another, forgiveness and peace with God, and a mission to share that Good News with the world in word and deed. That's the Rock upon which Jesus builds his church. That's what matters.

Just like that remarkable old pile of history and stones known as the Holy Sepulchre, sometimes how we do church gets in the way of what we need to see, to understand, to do. Sometimes we get caught up with the trivialities and business and upsets and slights of our own experience of church, with the meetings and the budgets and the disputes and complaints, and something sets us off like a nine-iron to a beehive, and we get distracted by it all. We lose focus. It all stops making sense. Until we remember to look past all that, and return to the foundation, the cornerstone, the bedrock of our faith. The Rock we call Jesus, and what he did for you, for me, for all the hurting world, the world which God so loved that He gave His only son, that whoever believes, that whoever builds his life on that Rock, will never die.

Friends, let's put distractions aside. Let's regain our focus. Let's build our lives and our church on the Rock, on the bedrock of our faith, on the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. No other foundation will ever survive; no other foundation will do. 

Rev. Douglas Rollwage is minister at Zion, Charlottetown.

People & Places

Find more online at presbyterianrecord.ca

Photographs can be uploaded at presbyterianrecord.ca.



CALVIN, NORTH BAY, ONT.

The members of the Charlotte Small Auxiliary donned their best hats and ribbons for the second annual Victorian tea, bake and jewelry sale. The turnout was great, the tea was sold out, and the servers looked fantastic. Here members of the auxiliary pose for a photo before opening the doors at the start of the event.



ST. ANDREW'S, WESTVILLE, N.S.

Happy anniversary, St. Andrew's! Rev. Bonnie Wynn, the church's minister, and Rev. Jeff Lackie, the guest speaker, cut the (very Presbyterian) cake.



ST. STEPHEN'S, PETERBOROUGH, ONT.

St. Stephen's welcomed a bunch of new members to the congregation on April 17. In the back row are Laura Davis, Rev. Ed Musson, Bernice Hewitt, John Hewitt, Chris McMaster, Jacqueline Scuka, and Darlene Dauncey. Seated are Robbie Ott and Garrett Ott, and standing beside them are Nana Fynn, Allyson Lucas, and Rev. Lorna Hillian.

THE OTHER SIX DAYS

A Mathematician God and a Killer Preacher

Some stuff to watch—or maybe not. *by* **BRADLEY CHILDS**

VIDEO

Michio Kaku is a theoretical physicist teaching at City College, New York. He is the author of eight books on string theory and quantum field theory. He's written nearly 80 published articles. And he's done hundreds of radio and television shows. Mostly though he is a science popularizer. Like Carl Sagan before him, his true dream is to engage people everywhere in science. Kaku seeks out ways to connect new and unexpected people with physics and mathematics. Michio Kaku has been making some waves recently in interviews. His explanations of science are starting to sound very... well, spiritual. In fact, though he believes in a God that orders reality he does not believe in an interventionist God.

FIND IT @ [youtube.com](#). Search for "Michio Kaku: Is God a Mathematician?"

TV

Remember: just because I point to it doesn't mean I endorse it or that you should watch it. That's probably the case here. *Preacher* is a new television program. Originally a very bloody graphic novel, *Preacher* is made by Even Goldberg and Seth Rogan (of all



Nichole Nordeman, *The Unmaking*

people) who worked together on *Superbad* and *Neighbors* as well as many other films. Its head writer is Garth Ennis who wrote *Constantine*. This is a story about a preacher in Texas just back from a mysterious past (a la *Pale Rider*). He takes over for his father. But he's better at breaking arms than preaching. *Preacher's* Dominic Cooper may or may not be possessed. He may be a half demon, half angel child. In any case, he travels around with his witty drunken Irish vampire friend trying to reconcile a broken world with the God he says has abandoned it.

FIND IT @ [amc.com/shows/preacher](#)

NEW SINGLE


Stemming from the Heaven on Earth that is Colorado Springs, Nichole Nordeman has made a splash here and there in the Christian music industry. She has a few Gospel awards and Dove awards but lately she has been more behind the scenes. However, for a little while now, new songs have been popping up on her website. There are six new songs actually. *Slow Down* is worth a listen.

FIND IT @ [nicholenordeman.com](#)

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

If you were looking to create a whole new mega-church of your own I've got something for you. First off, it doesn't seem that difficult. You just need some cash on hand and the attitude of Peter Criss' original KISS ad ("willing to do anything"). Second, you could just reverse engineer this video. Do either of those two things and you will be just fine.

FIND IT @ [youtube.com](#).

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Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at Fairview, Vancouver.

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Murray, 36 Bridge St., Sackville, NB
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revjeff@nb.sympatico.ca.

St. John's, Nfld., St. David's;

Full-time minister; Interim
Moderator Rev. Derek Krunys;
709-687-7742; stdavids.nf.ca.

Stanley, N.B., St. Peter's; Full-time
minister; Interim Moderator
Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St.,
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1M2;
507-455-8220;
deblaikie@gmail.com.

Tabusintac, N.B., St. John's; New
Jersey, Zion; and Bartibog Bridge,
St. Matthew's; Full-time three-point
charge; Interim Moderator Rev. J.
Gillis Smith, 535 King George Hwy.,
Miramichi, NB E1V 1N2;
rachmsmi@nbnnet.nb.ca.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Beaconsfield, Que., Briarwood;
Minister who is able to work with all
ages, connect with young families,
strong communicator and teacher
of the Christian faith; Interim
Moderator Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries;
514-288-5256 ext. 209;
rdevries@presbyteriancollege.ca;
profile at

briarwoodpresbyterianchurch.ca.
Kars, Ont., St. Andrew's and Vernon,
Osgoode; Full-time minister two-
point charge; Interim Moderators
Rev. Doug Kendall, 613-836-5917;
rev.doug@me.com; rev.doug.
kendall@gmail.com; and Rev. Shaun
Seaman, 613-836-1429;
shaun.seaman110@gmail.com.

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faith and compelling witness
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Rev. Dr. Kay Diviney; 514-842-3431;
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envision the Gospel,
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St. Columba by-the-Lake,
Pointe-Claire, QC

Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

Ajax, St. Timothy's; Full-time;

Interim Moderator Rev. Harry J. Bradley, 4156 Sheppard Ave. E., Scarborough ON M1S 1T3; harryjbradley@gmail.com.

Ashburn, Burns; Full-time minister;

Interim Moderator Rev. Andrew Allison, PO Box 104, Leaskdale ON LOC 1C0; 905-852-5921; a.allison@saintpauls.ca.

Caledon, Claude; Part-time minister;

Interim Moderator: Rev. Rebekah Mitchell, 44 Church St. E., Brampton ON L6V 1G3; 647-969-5456; mitchrr@gmail.com; Congregational profile available at claudechurch.com/ministry-opportunity.html

Campbellford, St. Andrew's and

Burnbrae, St. Andrew's; Full-time minister, two-point charge; Start date September 1, 2016; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Douglas Brown, 132 Northshore Rd., Grafton ON K0K 2G0; 905-349-3198; chloe@eagle.ca.

Guelph, Duff's; seeking a forward-thinking full-time minister to provide strong leadership, preach to the practicalities and encourage new forms of worship, music and ministry; Interim Moderator Rev. Bill Bynum, c/o Duff's Presbyterian Church, 319 Brock St. S., Guelph ON N1H 6H9; congregation's profile available on church's website, the Ministry & Church Vocations website and from the Interim Moderator.

Palmerston, Knox; Full-time new grad or 3/4 time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Kathy Morden,

PO Box 8, Neustadt ON N0G 2M0; 519-321-1942;

kcpc-revkathy@wightman.ca.

Streetsville (Mississauga); St.

Andrew's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Gale Macdonald, 1338 Clarkson Rd. N., Mississauga, ON L5J 2W5; 905-822-8911; revgalemacdonald@gmail.com.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Bayfield, Knox; Part-time; Interim

Moderator Rev. John Henderson, PO Box 824, Exeter, ON N0M 1S6; 519-235-2608; henderson.johncharles@gmail.com.

Brantford, Greenbrier; Part-time

minister (66%); Interim Moderator Joyce DeGier-VanderSpek; 519-469-3904; joycedegiervdspek@gmail.com.

Innerkip, Innerkip; near Woodstock

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Owen Sound, St. Andrew's; Music

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Simcoe, St. Paul's; Full-time minister;

Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Stanley Cox, 65 Tan Ave., Waterford, ON N0E 1Y0; 519-443-4798; stan.cox@sympatico.ca; sppc@kwic.com;

visit website stpaulssimcoe.com.

Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

No vacancies submitted.


Synod of Saskatchewan

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Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

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Heughan, Cairine, was called home on May 23, 2016 to join her husband Robert who passed away May 3, 2015. Active members of St. Andrew's Church (St. Lambert, Que., Islington, Ont. and Sackville, N.B.), they spent almost 63 years together involved in many committees, sessions, boards of managers, WMS and AMS.

They will be missed by their three children and spouses, seven grandchildren and spouses as well as their four great grandchildren. +

Obituaries

FOR THE JOURNEY

In the Details

A lazy canoe day almost turned to tragedy. *by* DAVID WEBBER

IT WAS JUST ONE OF THOSE DAYS: summer, sunny, warm, full of easy livin'. My brother-in-law Gerald had a Chestnut Prospector canoe that he had hardly used since the day he bought it a dozen years previously. The Kootenay River had tamed itself of most of its spring-time craziness and was running high, but meltwater blue and full of apparent lazy whirlpools. I figured we'd drift down the river from Skookumchuck at the mouth of the Lussier River to the Ta Ta Creek bridge. It was an easy afternoon's trip on a river that Gerald and I had known virtually all of our lives.

We enlisted the girls—our wives were 30 years younger then—to drive us from the farm at Ta Ta Creek up to Skookumchuck with instructions to meet us at the bridge in a couple of hours (note: *skookumchuck* means “strong water” in the Chinook jargon). And so we put the nearly new cedar canvas canoe into the river, donned our life jackets, dug in our paddles and angled out to the centre of the river.

What a day; the mighty Kootenay pushing us downstream with its hissing whirlpools, Gerald and I paddling no more than necessary, the Rocky Mountains on one side, the Purcell Mountains on the other and the beautiful river with us in it in the middle. A few miles downstream we angled over to the eastern shore where a little snye left the main river for about a kilometre and then re-joined it creating an interesting series of riffles, eddies and whirlpools where it came back to the river. We decided to enter the riffles for fun. The lovely canoe came alive. We felt her shift a little



sideways and both of us dug in our paddles to correct it. The problem was that we weren't paying attention to one another and dug our paddles in with a vengeance both on the same side of the canoe—a classic river canoeing mistake. The other problem was that we were sitting on the high cane canoe seats instead of kneeling on the bottom of the canoe thus lowering the centre of gravity like we should have been—another classic river canoeing mistake.

The canoe leaned to one side and the mighty Kootenay seized its opportunity.

The whirlpools and riffles, much stronger than we first thought, literally sucked the canoe right off of our bums as we leaned over. In a nanosecond we were in the icy water, popped out of the canoe like a couple of corks and the canoe was on its side filled with water. The powerful waters, mostly glacial fed from the icefield in the Rocky Mountains, began to play with us like a cat with a couple of mice.

No problem, I thought, at least we are both wearing good life jackets.

That's when I heard Gerald choking on the other side of the canoe. I kicked hard to fight my way through the current and get around the canoe. What I saw struck terror into my heart. With the warm July sun lulling him into complacency, Gerald had left his life jacket undone and it had slipped off of him when he hit the water. He was not a strong swimmer; he had gone under when he entered the river, had taken a lungful of water and was choking almost to the point of losing consciousness. The river's hissing whirlpools were ➤



FOR THE JOURNEY, continued

trying desperately to suck him under and he was struggling, three metres away from the canoe. Somehow I had to get to him, get his life jacket on him again and get him back to the canoe, all through the deep and powerful swirling current of the Kootenay. We were in the claws of the river that its first white explorer, David Thompson, described in his journals almost 200 years earlier as: "Very dangerous from violent eddies and whirlpools which threatened us with sure destruction and which we escaped by hard paddling and keeping (to) the middle of the river."

That experience with the Kootenay River was an extreme struggle that still sends chills down my spine whenever I remember it nearly 30 years later. Somehow I managed to get Gerald back into his life jacket and back to the canoe and eventually we were able to work the capsized, water-filled canoe through the whirlpools and eddies over to the western shore of the river. There we lay exhausted on the riverbank regaining our strength and courage. We had to re-launch the canoe in order to continue our journey down to where the girls were to meet us at the bridge. I can't remember if we told the girls how close we had come to a tragedy or not, but I guess they will find out if they read this.

I tell that story in order to tell this one. There is an old saw, most likely anonymous, that states that "God is in the details." The point of the proverb is that details are important and implies that something may seem simple, but in fact the details are complicated and likely to cause problems. In my river story the apparently simple detail that was so important and yet overlooked, almost costing a life, was having one's life jacket properly done up whilst canoeing even when it seemed like it would be a lazy float down a

beautiful river as a sunny summer soiree. That is one way that one could read this story I suppose.

But I take something else from it entirely. Indeed, God is in the details, but God is in the details as a participant not just as an observer watching as things come unravelled because some shmoo like me overlooked a detail. The other story—the God story that speaks to my story—is the long detailed story of Joseph's life in the Bible (Genesis 30-50).

He was born as the much loved child of Jacob and his dearest Rachel and yet as the details unfold, this preferred son becomes the apparent victim of details run amuck time and again. Joseph ends up a slave and then a prisoner in Egypt and then a leading minister of Egypt and eventually the saviour of his 70-member Abrahamic family, most of whom wished him dead and thought that he was. But the Bible's point about Joseph and all the details apparently run amuck in his life is that God was involved in every detail. God was bringing his goodness and purpose out of them for Joseph and for all of Joseph's clan and eventually for all God's people Israel in the Exodus. The point is that looking at it through the lens of faith, God is in all the details of life working all things together for good for those who are called by him and love him, as the Apostle Paul would succinctly put it some 1,500 years later (Romans 8:28).

As Gerald and I sheepishly shook the glacial river silt out of our shorts and lugged the canoe up the banks of the Kootenay river that summer afternoon so many years ago, there was little doubt in either of our minds that God had been involved in the details that day. ☩

Rev. David Webber, now retired, lives in Lac La Hache, B.C.

God beyond all praising,
beyond our limits.

Name above all names,
as a mother hen, you spread your wings and you shelter.

Like living water, you refresh and sustain.

As a potter, you fashion and create.

As light, you reveal and shine in the darkness.

As word, you are made flesh and share our lives.

Immortal,
Invisible,
Most blessed,
Most glorious,
Ancient of Days,
God only wise:

Name above all names,
you are beyond all praising;
beyond full description and final definition;
beyond the limits of our language.

We come to the end,
we are still with you
and you are still more.

—A prayer by Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, June 5, 2016.

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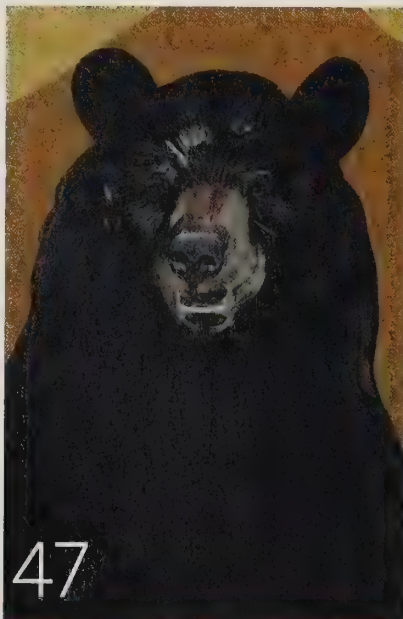
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FOR THE RECORD

It's About Love

Hip frontman has taught us what matters. *by* **DAVID HARRIS**

If hockey is our national religion, the Hip have been among our most revered preachers.

CANADA had a national spiritual experience recently. Unusually, it was not centred on hockey—although hockey was in the songs.

The event, of course, was The Tragically Hip's nationally televised homecoming concert in Kingston. It was even screened for the Canadian Olympic athletes in Rio.

Nearly 12 million people watched the concert—that's one in three Canadians, making it the second-most-watched television event ever, after the men's gold-medal hockey game at the 2010 Winter Olympics.

If hockey is our national religion, the Hip have been among our most revered preachers.

Rev. Don Hill, a Presbyterian minister in St. Andrew's, Amherstburg, south of Windsor, Ont., shed some light on why this is in an interview on CBC radio a few days before the concert. Hill had announced that the church would open an hour and a half before screening the concert to people wanting to discuss death, dying and living with cancer.

Hill—who admitted he wasn't even a Hip fan—observed that lead singer Gord Downie's "openness about his situation and his willingness to reach out to his fan base in a loving and kind way and to be very courageously involved in an active way" struck a chord with many people.

"He has become a model for all of us to use our woundedness to become healers, to become people who care."

And the Hip's songs, "talk about life events, real places." They help us to see parallels in our own lives in which we can find "love and hope."

And that was the Hip concert: full of joy and anguish, Downie raging against the dying of the light. Emotions and relationships everyone can identify with. Plus

all the defining themes of our nation expressed in their lyrics, including those little out-of-the-way towns.

I mean, who titles a song "Bobcaygeon"? Look it up on the map if you don't know where it is. I was at a funeral in the Presbyterian church there recently.

And band members who appeared to remain otherwise ordinary Canucks despite 30 years in the limelight. Down-to-earth types.


There was a religious leader once who had a similar effect on people. Down-to-earth. Occasionally sneaking a bite to eat out of some farmer's field. Went fishing with his friends.

His message was that religion was not about rules but relationships. It was OK to heal on the Sabbath. People were not unclean; all people were God's children—and preciously loved by God.

And God? God, he said, is about love. God is about relationships—about drawing people into an intimate relationship where they can become fully who they were formed from the dust to be. That's far more challenging than following rules, by the way.

Jesus was so focused on this message that eventually the politicians, fearing an uprising, and the you're-going-to-burn-in-hell religious leaders, fearing the end of their organization, found an excuse to have him murdered by the state.

But he rose from the dead.

We in the church need to remember that when we engage with the world. Ultimately, Love and Hope win. They really do. 

David Harris is the Record's publisher and editor.

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

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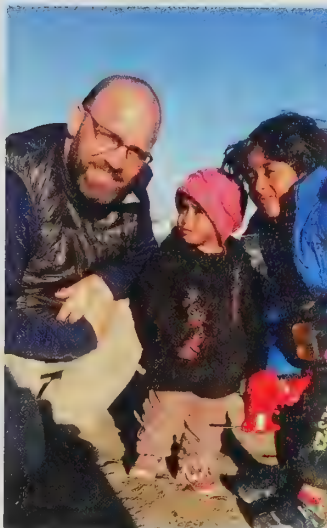
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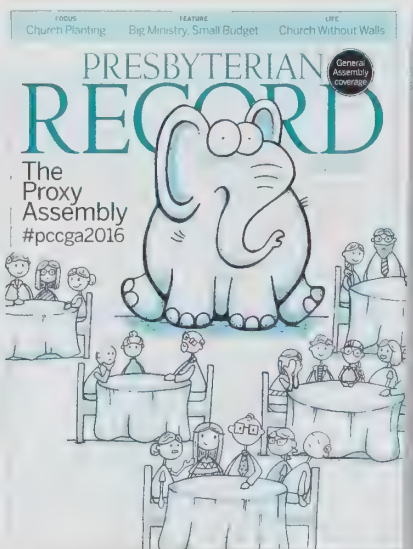
REV. DEREK MACLEOD is a son of Halifax. He was ordained in 2000 and served churches in Montreal and Toronto. He is currently associate minister of outreach and mission at Myers Park, Charlotte, North Carolina. He is married to Catherine Chappell and together they have three daughters. Macleod was honoured to share a few hours with Rev. Dr. Joseph McLelland for an interview in this issue.

REV. DR. TODD STATHAM is from Vancouver Island, and studied at Presbyterian College, Montreal. He served in Malawi for International Ministries from 2011-2014. Currently he is a sessional lecturer at the University of Lueneburg, Germany. In this issue, he shares some thoughts on how Germany is addressing the many refugees there. He is married to Annika Voeltz; they have three children.



LORNA BALL is a member of St. Andrew's, Brandon, Man. She's a graduate of Ewart College and the University of Toronto, and holds a certificate in social work from the University of Waterloo. She has held various offices in the congregations where she and her minister husband Glenn Ball have served, including choir director, pianist/organist, Sunday school teacher, president of the Women's Association, church cleaner and treasurer. She was also secretary of the first Youth in Mission Council. She loves quilting, delights in living each day as a blessing from God and strives to share this blessing with others, like in her reflections this month on Romans 14:8-13.

Letters



Write to us: LETTERS@PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA

Still Waiting

Re Churches Still Waiting for Arrival of Sponsored Refugees, July/August

At St. Andrew's, Coldwater, Ont., we're still waiting for our sponsored family to arrive, but for somewhat different reasons. Our family's travel dates were provided and then they were put on hold for medical reasons. Seems strange, since the family was "travel-ready"

when we accepted them.

We're now in the same situation as a number of other congregations: we have a house rented, and we don't want to give it up. In a small village like Coldwater, the rental market is tiny. We were fortunate to find the place we have! However, the rent money could be better used to actually support the family members once they arrive. We're in prayer for speedy

medical clearance and quick travel. We'll continue to remember the other sponsoring groups who are in a similar situation.

AUBREY HAWTON, ONLINE COMMENT

Progressive and Traditional

Re Can We Talk, Encrusted Words, Online

The article is brilliant, well written and generous across the board. My criticism of it, if there is one to be had, is that the idealism of the article falls victim to the fallacy of the middle ground. While I have a soft spot for unrepentant idealism and regularly argue that we need more of it in the church, I'm unswayed that we will be able to engage in unloaded discourse.

JARED MILLER, FACEBOOK COMMENT

Thank you for your post. I imagine it was not an easy assignment. Our shared hope, I suspect, is that all conversations will be marked by a common desire to build up Christ's church and to proclaim the gospel of grace in word and service. Your characterizations of "progressive" and "traditionalist" are perhaps idealized caricatures, but instructive in any case.

One point of contention I have with the article is the inclusion of a sentence, or perhaps the omission of its parallel. In your description of a "progressive" you write, "Some on the progressive side

Pastor Shep



www.pastorshep.ca

©Susan Mattinson

have gone as far as to characterize all traditionalists as hateful and fearful, as having the same spirit as the Orlando attacker.” While this is sadly true I feel that either the sentence should have been omitted or its parallel included in the “traditionalist” characterization. For example, “Some on the traditionalist side have gone so far as to characterize all progressives as Bible-denying Christ-haters who will all burn in hell.”

Difficult words to hear perhaps, but similar words I have heard.

MATTHEW SAMS, ONLINE COMMENT

Roland De Vries responds:

I appreciate the specific point you raise, and it did cross my mind while writing and after. I may have missed balance there. My only caution would be that if we are talking specifically about the Presbyterian Church in Canada, which I was, then I haven't heard anyone on the “traditional” side speaking the words you have described. I think that we sometimes perceive the conversation that is happening in the PCC through the lens of how that conversation is happening in other contexts, which I think is probably unavoidable but also unfortunate in important ways. But I acknowledge that the “traditional” point of view offered (as with the “progressive”) is only one—and is not representative of all who hold what could be called “traditional” points of view, in the PCC or elsewhere.

Praise for The Other Six Days

Re A Mathematician God and a Killer Preacher, July/August

Thank you, Rev. Bradley Childs. I look forward to your article every month. I especially liked the July/August article with such diversity of choices. I want to see more videos of Michio Kaku, download Nichole Nordeman's “Slow Down” and enjoyed “Parody of our Modern Church Service.” I can hardly wait for the next issue of the *Presbyterian Record*!

HEATHER HAMBY, CALGARY, ALTA.

Great GA Coverage

Re General Assembly Live Blogs, Online

As a retired minister I find this is a great way to connect with the people and work of the church assembling. I appreciate the daily photos and your blogs, particularly when you explain the recommendation and provide a selection of speeches. This is the best year's coverage, in my view.

JOSEPH MCLELLAND, ONLINE COMMENT

Cartoon Commissioners

Re July/August Cover

I haven't read the entire *Record* yet but just have to email you to tell you how brilliant (sadly) the cover is!

JEAN LAWRENCE, VIA EMAIL

This is great! I'm trying to figure out which commissioner is me... maybe the one doing the double face palm?

JACQUI FOXALL, FACEBOOK COMMENT

Thanks! I didn't have any people in mind when I was drawing the crowd. Just wanted a variety of people.

SUSAN MATTINSON,
FACEBOOK COMMENT

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POP CHRISTIANITY

Rhythm for Rhythm

Crossing the street in Hanoi. *by* **ANDREW FAIZ**

When I asked a fellow tourist from Dublin what she thought of Hanoi, she exclaimed, “I crossed the street!” We laughed because it is an accomplishment.

At first glance, or second and third, traffic in Hanoi, like in many other parts of the world for that matter, does seem chaotic. Vehicles seem to move to their own logic, nearly missing each other, going in whatever direction they please, turning when they want.

But watch for a while, get in there and cross the street, and you realize it isn’t chaos at all.

Here in the West we have rules; lots and lots of rules. We protect ourselves from myriad eventualities with safety mechanisms and edicts. That is why it is possible to drive on our streets and listen to music, talk on the phone, eat a meal or do personal grooming, while in a comfortable, climate controlled vessel. We have predictable rhythms, lights and lines (a Canadian invention, of course), which force us all onto the narrow path.

We call this civilization, and it is in some ways. Everything is regulated—speed, direction, space. Thousands of us travel daily on the same roads without incident. A vehicle that suddenly cuts you off, or takes up too much space, can ruin a day because it has broken the rules of engagement. Stay within the lines (did I mention it’s a Canadian invention?) and all will be well.

Thousands of people sharing the same road without any relationship



**There is acknowledgement.
There might not be rules
of speed and space but there
are considerations
of community. You don’t
want to be hit, or to cause
an accident, and no one
else does as well.**

with each other. No eye contact; each in their own hermetically sealed bubble, obeying the rules, staying in their space. It is lonely in a way; that’s why, perhaps, we need the distraction of the radio or some other entertainment, while sitting in a mechanical box on wheels. People are not people; they’re obstacles, disembodied, lacking spirit

or being. They are things.

But not in Hanoi. Step onto the road and you are inside a living, breathing organism. It is not for the faint hearted; real life never is, only fantasy.

What at first seems like chaos is actually an intricate dance of complicated relationships. There is eye contact. There is acknowledgement. There might not be rules of speed and space but there are considerations of community. You don’t want to be hit, or to cause an accident, and no one else does as well. You step boldly onto the road and move with a steady pace, keeping an eye for others, as they keep an eye for you, watching your pace, adjusting their own.

People accommodate their vehicles for each other. In Hanoi the majority drive scooters, though there are cars and trucks as well. There are no sudden turns, no rushing, no arrogance. The organism can’t afford selfishness, can’t afford the cold-hearted self-regard of machines shoving their own interest.

It reminded me of what I’ve always considered to be Bob Dylan’s wisest lyric: “To live outside the law you must be honest.” It took some practice, from small side streets to the major inter-sections, to learn how to be inside an organism. But once inside, matching rhythm for rhythm, it throbbed with the pulse of creation. +

Andrew Faiz is the Record’s senior editor.

BULLETIN

Community and World News

FORT MCMURRAY UPDATE

Worshipping Together

Faith, Fort McMurray, continues despite the chaos. *by* **ANDREW FAIZ**

Canadian Presbyterians donated more than \$233,000 through Presbyterian World Service & Development in response to the fires that tore through Fort McMurray, Alta., in early May.

Nearly 90,000 people were evacuated from Fort McMurray after the fires jumped the Athabasca and Clearwater rivers and burned down 2,400 buildings, including 2,000 homes. All members of Faith, the Presbyterian church in town, evacuated safely. Clerk of session Brenda Brewer contacted all members and regular worshippers. A couple had lost their homes; all were safe with family and friends or at rented rooms around Alberta. ➤

FORT MCMURRAY, continued

Rev. Dianne Ollerenshaw, director of regional ministries for the Synod of Alberta and the Northwest, is the interim moderator during a clergy vacancy, and drives up from her home in Calgary to lead worship every few weeks, and to hold session and search committee meetings.

She met with the Faith session in early August to discuss how best to distribute the PWS&D funds. In an email to the *Record*, she wrote: "It takes time to roll out the money because we want to ensure the priorities meet needs of people in Fort McMurray, [and] the values of PWS&D and we want to work with partners who will ensure

there is fiduciary accountability of the funds. The session has had input about the priority of needs and we hope to reach out to the Presbytery of Edmonton-Lakeland for input."

Faith's most recent minister, Rev. Lisa Aide, had notified the congregation in the spring that she had accepted the call to a church in Ontario closer to her family. The fires came quickly, and the evacuation process was immediate. Residents were not allowed re-entry for three weeks. Aide never did make it back to town for a closing worship service. She had served Faith for eight years since graduating from seminary. A sense of

loss and lack of closure is felt by the congregation.

In its four decades in Fort McMurray, Faith has not had a church building. They met at a local high school's auditorium, which has expansive audio/visual facilities. The congregation does have a manse for the minister. Since the fire in May, the school has been closed for cleaning and refurbishing. The congregation has been meeting in the manse, with members leading worship on most Sundays. +

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

ARABIC-SPEAKING PASTORS HOLD RETREAT IN WINNIPEG

PASTORS FROM SIX Arabic-speaking congregations in the Presbyterian Church in Canada held a retreat in Winnipeg in May for spiritual refreshment and mutual encouragement.

The congregational leaders, whose churches are spread from Montreal to Winnipeg, are concerned about building sustainable ministries into the second generation. Teenagers and 20-somethings born in the Middle East quickly learn English and want to worship in English; however, they want a context that appreciates the Arab ethos and culture.

These congregations, therefore, become bilingual almost immediately.

The congregations draw from a large number of Arabic-speaking countries, being made up of Egyptians and Syrians, Jordanians and Lebanese, Iraqis and people from the Emirates. In these congregations, loyalty to homeland gives way to a commitment to being the church of Jesus Christ across national lines.

Those gathered spent time in study and prayer, telling the stories of their congregations, sharing ministry struggles, and gaining insights into Canadian Presbyterian culture. Peter Bush (minister at Westwood, Winnipeg), who spent some of his growing up years in the Middle East, spoke about Canadian Presbyterian history, paying special attention to the mission impetus that drove the church in the late 19th century, the First Nations story, and the impact of Church Union in 1925.

Syrian refugees and other refugees from the Middle East were a topic of

conversation. The pastors are being called on to provide translation and cultural awareness support to Euro-Canadian community groups and congregations that have sponsored refugees. As well, some government sponsored refugees have turned to the Arabic-speaking churches for help in navigating government services, medical appointments, and emotional and spiritual support.

The six congregations are, in order of their age: Chapel Place Church in Markham, Ont., (led by Nagi Said and Freddy Saleh), the Arabic Church in Montreal (led by Samy Said), Almanarah, Mississauga, Ont., (led by Sherif Garas), Almanarah, London, Ont., (led by William Khaili), Almanarah, Hamilton, Ont., (led by Amin Mansour), and Lighthouse Evangelical, Winnipeg, (led by Ibrahim Zabaneh).

The group hopes to make such gatherings an annual event. The gathering was funded by a grant from the Ewart Endowment for Theological Education.

+ —Peter Bush

Churches Offer Hospitality to Pokémon Go Players

THE CELLPHONE GAME Pokémon Go was all the rage this summer, and some Presbyterian churches had fun offering hospitality to players in their neighbourhoods and garnering some attention from the local press.

In Pokémon Go, players use their cellphones as they walk through areas of the real world in search of Pokémon (short for “pocket monsters”). These cartoon creatures appear on their phone screens and can be captured using items in the game.

At St. Andrew's, Edmonton, it all started when the church put up a quote from the Pokémon Mewtwo on its sign. Rev. Mark Chiang, the church's minister, sent out a photo of the sign on Twitter and it generated over 1,600 likes.

That sparked interest from the Edmonton *Metro* newspaper and CBC News, which did a television interview with him.

“For me it was to show church in a fun light,” he told the *Record*. “We have such a reputation as Christians of being against everything, and angry all the time. To show that we can have fun too is an important message for the community.”

Rev. Susan Mattinson, minister at First, Thunder Bay, Ont., was excited when the game was officially released in Canada on July 17.

Many culturally significant locations, including churches, are flagged in the game as Pokéstops where players can collect items, or as gyms where they can compete with other players.

Like most churches, First is a Pokéstop. This means not only that players can pick up new items there every few minutes, but in the game an



item called a lure can be attached to the location to attract a higher than normal number of Pokémon.

Mattinson proposed hosting “lure parties” with snacks and drinks. The session loved the idea and one elder offered to donate the \$90 it would take to run lure parties for three days a week throughout August and the first week of September.

The initiative garnered a lot of online attention, said Mattinson, with its poster getting 35,000 views and prompting a CBC story.

Usually about 12 people showed up at First for the two hours of lures on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings. A few were regulars, but there were always new faces.

“I think every day I’ve met new people,” Mattinson said. “Most of the people who come live in the immediate neighbourhood. They’re walking from their houses or they’re biking to get here.”

The goal, she said, was simply to meet people and show that “the church

can be helpful in a very practical way. And just to show people the church is not a scary building; it’s not filled with really strict, not-fun people.”

“Some of these kids who are coming have never been to a church,” she noted. “Never physically to a building.”

First plans to run its lure parties until Sept. 9, at which point younger players will be back in school.

St. Andrew's, Edmonton, also hosted a lure party on a Thursday evening after its sign drew a lot of attention online. About 20 people who just happened to be walking in the neighbourhood stopped by to play.

“When it [the game] first came out you had ... those who were just complaining about people staring at their phones all the time, not seeing this as an opportunity to be engaging with people,” Rev. Mark Chiang said. “I’m just grateful that we had taken that opportunity and that it got us talking to our neighbours in ways that our church hasn’t before.”

—Connie Wardle

MINISTRY

A Resurrection Story

New life is breaking out on Birdtail First Nation. *by* GLENN BALL

At Birdtail First Nation in Manitoba, the bones of a dead congregation have come together again, and flesh has appeared on it, and yes the breath of the Spirit is blowing through the people. They have a new name, and a renewed identity.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has a long history with the Dakota people, who moved over a century ago under increasing pressure from American leaders, even to the point of genocide. At that time the Dakota people had already encountered the gospel through Presbyterian missionaries. From the early days of encounters with Canadian Presbyterians, the Dakota were considered a mission of our church and supported in developing their own congregation. While never large numerically, and never a church that could hope to become self-supporting due to the levels of extreme poverty within the community, they had a stable ministry and were respected by the community.

With the ending of ordained missionary appointments in 1986, the fall-out from the first round of lawsuits from the abuses that happened at residential schools, and funding cutbacks, it became increasingly difficult to find people who would be missionary preachers and teachers on First Nations. So it was in the late 1990s that the Presbytery of Brandon made the decision to close the last of our churches on the reserves. God, however, delights in doing a new thing.

I began as synod staff person for Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario in 2008 and just before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission began in 2010,



Twenty-four people were baptized at Can Kaga Otina Tipi Wakan on Aug. 9, 2015.

I met people from a number of First Nations communities who expressed a desire to have services reinstated.

In early 2013, Yvonne Bearbull, then band councillor at Can Kaga Otina First Nation, and later the executive director of the Kenora Fellowship Centre, and I put together the first service. It consisted of a preacher, some taped music, and Yvonne bringing together many of her friends and relations for an Easter feast.

Over the next few years, Rev. Dr. Henry Hildebrandt and his wife Sarah joined the team, as did Rev. Jeanie Lee and the congregation of Knox, Neepawa. With my transition from synod staff to minister at St. Andrew's, Brandon, in January 2014, we now were in a place to provide scheduled leadership.

The biggest boost came from the large number of Koreans at Knox, Neepawa, who had a heart for sharing with First Nations people. They have provided Sunday school teachers, meals, music and gifts.

Twenty-four people were baptized on August 9, 2015, representing ages eight months to 56 years. It included a number of families who were baptized at the

same time, marking a multi-generational community of faith. We know it has taken the prayers and efforts of many people to culminate in the celebration of the first baptisms in many years.

The name of the church is "Can Kaga Otina Tipi Wakan." The Dakota name brings together the name of the community, Can Kaga Otina, or people who live in log houses, and adds 'holy house,' or Tipi Wakan. This reminds us that this is a holy dwelling for all of the members of the nation, not just those who show up on Sunday afternoon.

One day as we were meeting to pray, someone started singing "God is so good" when a new voice joined in singing the hymn in Dakota, and soon it was being sung in English, Dakota and Korean.

If we could wish anything for other congregations it would be that they find a way to dare to do something they have never done before, to share the love of Christ with others they have not known and to dare to sing with us "God is so good!" 🍷

Rev. Glenn Ball is minister at St. Andrew's, Brandon, Man.

Faith

Deepening your relationship with God

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY

Multiplying Everything

Finding truth and beauty.

by KATIE MUNNIK

WHEN FRIENDS gave my youngest a kaleidoscope, I didn't ask if they read this column. It proved to be the perfect gift, regardless. Nothing fancy or particularly high tech—just a round piece of wood, hollowed out and fit with a lens at one end. It is absolutely perfect for a three-year-old fist.

When I was a child, I had a kaleidoscope, too. A cardboard one, all rainbow-coloured. It looked a little gnawed at one end. I think my little brother tried to use it as a whistle. There was also a loose bit of glass inside which needed to be shuffled into place each time you wanted to play with it. Probably I dropped it too many times.

I've thought of acquiring a new one. Something more substantial, maybe with a brass tube or something wooden and handcrafted. It might sit on the mantelpiece in my house someday, a thing of beauty waiting >

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY, continued

for visitors or a quiet morning when the light would be right.

But none of this is why I called this column Kaleidoscopically. That was a matter of word derivation and imagery. I like the rich image of holding changing things up to the light to find new beauty. And the word kaleidoscope comes from the Greek *kalos*, meaning “beauty,” *eidos*, “that which is seen” and *skopeo*, “to examine.” A kaleidoscope is an observation of beautiful forms. And one that you can hold in your hand.

The kaleidoscope was invented in 1816 by the Scottish scientist Sir David Brewster. He meant it to be a tool to help study the polarization of light, but it soon caught on as a child’s toy.

Officially, my little one’s toy isn’t a kaleidoscope at all but teleidoscope because it doesn’t have any tiles or beads hidden inside, but instead fragments the view itself into an abstract repeating mosaic. He likes it because he can stick his thumb inside and hold it tightly. And because it multiplies everything. He tells me you can see everything in the world as two or six things. So it has to be in his backpack whenever we leave the house, especially on Sundays. He likes to look at the lights in church and at the statue of Jesus.

This statue is huge: 16 feet tall and set onto an impressive double wishbone concrete arch above the centre of the church, part of an extensive restoration project after the Second World War. Llandaff Cathedral was bombed in 1941 and the roof collapsed, destroying much of the interior of the church. George Pace, the architect who oversaw the restoration, noted that in mediaeval days, the cathedral had a pulpitum, a stone screen which divided the sanctuary, creating a sense of veiled mystery. His plan was to

In many ways, I am not at home in this Anglican cathedral where my family worships these days. The traditions and habits are still unfamiliar, but this image of Christ helps me. Seeing it, I remember that I am met on the road and there is comfort in that mystery. Watching my little one carefully holding his toy to his eye, and looking at the duplicating image, he tells me that it is beautiful.

create a similar effect while not obscuring the view throughout the whole length of the building at ground level. So he designed the wishbone arch and Jacob Epstein was commissioned to create the statue. Epstein was a modernist sculptor whose parents were Polish Jewish immigrants to New York in the late 19th century. He later moved to Europe and played a significant role in the post-war art world there. The Christ figure he created for Llandaff is unusual and compelling. His face is beardless, unfamiliar, compassionate, open and enduring. It is a face that invites contemplation in the middle of the worship space. Though the space is divided, Christ is present through the sanctuary. In many ways, I am not at home in this Anglican cathedral where my family worships these days. The traditions and habits are still unfamiliar, but this image of Christ helps me. Seeing it, I remember that I am met on the road and there is comfort in that mystery. Watching my little one carefully holding his toy to his eye, and looking at the duplicating

image, he tells me that it is beautiful.

During the service for the rehallowing of the sanctuary on April 10, 1957, Bob Evans, a newly appointed curate sat next to Epstein, looking up at the powerful figure. His question was clumsy, but understandable.

“Was it difficult for you, a practicing Jew, to create a Christ for a Christian congregation?”

Epstein replied: “All my life I have searched for truth and beauty and, in the end, I discovered that it is in the idea of the Christ that they are to be found.”

Indeed. In the face of Christ wherever we may find it. In the image of Christ familiar and strange. In the face of many faces all mirroring the image of God. In the two things or the six things or 600 things that help us observe wonderful forms, truth and beauty are found and God is praised. +

Katie Munnik lives in Cardiff, Wales, with three kids and a professor husband. She blogs at The Messy Table on presbyterianrecord.ca.



Saint Anthony of Padua; artist: Raphael, c. 1502.

PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

Lost and Found

Seeking like Jesus. *by* **LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

Luke 15:1-10
Pentecost 17
September 11, 2016

I figure I'm as Presbyterian as can be. But there are a lot of Catholics in my family tree, and in the twigs and

branches of my generation. I guess that's why, when I lose something and I get really worked up about it, I pray to Saint Anthony of Padua. He's the saint to turn to when you're in distress over lost or stolen things. One popular version of prayer to Anthony is, "Tony, Tony, turn around! Something's lost that must be found!" ➤

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PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY, continued

Now, before you start to compose a letter that will set me straight about prayer to saints, let me tell you how it works for me. It's not so much a prayer as a forced pause. I close my eyes. I slow my breathing. I visualize the thing I'm looking for. My memory usually clears. Sometimes I see what I've misplaced. More often, I find the clarity to look again, and really see what I need to see. I think God has more important things to worry about than the last location of my keys. So I say Saint Anthony's name instead.

I hate to lose things. I panic. I feel really stupid when I can't find something I need. When it isn't where it's supposed to be. I'm relieved when I find what I've lost. I'm happy. Maybe not happy enough to throw a party, unlike the two characters in the short parables we read today.

There are three lost and found stories in Luke 15. We love the longer one about the son who tells his father to get lost, only to lose himself. The son finds his own way home. Coins and sheep can neither repent nor find their own way home. Someone has to go after them.

Both the woman who drops the coin pinned inside her dress for safekeeping, and the shepherd who ends his workday one sheep short lose something of themselves. Some scholars say the woman's treasured coin is the only hard currency she owns. Maybe a wedding gift. Maybe an inheritance. The sheepherder caring for a hundred is steward of a family or community flock.

He'll be liable and lose honour if he doesn't find that lost sheep.

Does Jesus mean God loses something of God's self when we wander away from the fold? When we leave the path of discipleship, does God grieve? Does Jesus want us to imagine God is desperate to find us, to bring us home?

How about this? Can we imagine God taking us good, stay-safe-in-the-fold sheep for granted, and taking off after the prodigal sheep? Does Jesus count on us being faithful and obedient so he can turn his attention to people we may not think belong in our pasture? He says, "Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance." (verse 7)

We're the 99. We already know God loves us. We know God forgives our sins. We count on that. Most of us have never really been lost. We can't imagine being anywhere but where we are, on the inside. Some of us have found our way, or have been found and led inside. We're safe now. We can't expect Jesus to be preoccupied with us when there are still so many treasured lost coins and sheep to be found.

Life lived safe on the inside can be really boring. How about stepping outside, following Jesus' example, looking for the lost? We'll probably find them, as Jesus did, where people who are different from us gather. Especially people insiders like to call outsiders (verse 2).

One thing's certain: If we go where Jesus goes, we'll never get lost. +

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe is
minister at Glenview, Toronto.*



RENEWAL

Renewing of Minds

Discerning what God is saying to me. *by* **FRED STEWART**

"Do not be conformed to this age but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Romans 12:2

SOMETIMES A TEXT OF SCRIPTURE sticks in my mind for days and even weeks. While this can be true of music as well, I have come to realize the spiritual significance of these Bible passages that take hold of my consciousness for a time.

When I get captured by a verse or two I try to figure out what God is saying to me through His word. Occasionally, the message is easily comprehended. More often it takes days or even weeks to attain any

confidence that I have really heard from the Lord. I am fairly certain this is more my thick-headedness than scripture's opacity.

A couple of weeks ago Romans 12:2 became the latest verse to "get stuck." For the first few days I let it roll around in my mind. As it became more pervasively present, I began to ask myself why it was this verse at this time. This did not result in any insight or specific revelation.

Then I moved to realize once again that if it is God trying to get my attention, I needed His help to decipher His message. I should add at this point that this is still a work in progress. Here are some of the questions I am processing.

First, does the scope of what I am >

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RENEWAL, continued

supposed to be learning concern only my life or is it intended for my ministry context? I am leaning towards hearing this in terms of both. It may seem obvious that these contexts are tied together. However, as I finish up my time with the Renewal Fellowship this month and face discussions with my congregations and family about my retirement plans, there is some fuzz around whether this is about God's will for my future post-congregational ministry or while still in my current charge.

The bigger question is this: What is it that my mind has distorted because of the influence of the world and culture so that God has to renovate in my mind and heart before I can discern His perfect will? I continue to struggle with it as I write this. What I can tell you is that I am in great need of having my mind renewed so that the pull of the Kingdom of God can far outweigh the pull of this age and culture.

All this to say many of us face challenges these days in figuring out the perfect will of God. Congregations are trying to discern their futures. We all are struggling with the current issues concerning human sexuality. Many are looking for direction in their families and ministries.

What I know is that God is challenging me with this verse at this time. Maybe it will stick in your mind as it has mine. +

Rev. Fred Stewart is executive director of the Renewal Fellowship. Contact him at fred@pastorfred.ca.

SHARING WITNESS

Faith Walk

Finding a way through pain.

by VIVIAN KETCHUM

AS I GREW UP, I TURNED AWAY from anything that had to do with religion. The very word reminded me of residential school. Evening prayers and forced Sunday school attendance; I was having none of that in my life. I wanted no reminders of my childhood at all. In doing so, I was turning my back on faith.

As a young adult struggling with alcohol addictions, it took finding my faith to take those first steps to sobriety. Ironically it was at a church that I found faith or it found me. My brother James invited me to his church one evening. I had left Child and Family Services after reaching the age of majority. I was at a >

SHARING WITNESS, continued

crossroads in my life.

I felt something was missing in my life. An emptiness that the bottle couldn't fill.

I was living with James and he had certain rules in his home. I put up with his church routine because I needed a roof over my head. I called him a holy roller with all his praying and reading the Bible. Still, after a few weeks of living with him, I started to feel an awakening inside of me. My brother had changed and I could see it.

Then one evening my brother invited me to his church. I went reluctantly and sat in the back pew. Even sitting back there, I heard and felt the message. I was listening to what the speaker was saying. Then after he was done, an invitation was given. I got up and headed to the front.

I have never regretted that moment. I found faith. The emptiness within me was gone. Still my life didn't get easier with my new faith walk. There were still challenges and struggles. I even slipped back to the bottle on occasion. But drinking wasn't the same as before. It didn't feel right. The ugliness of the bottle didn't sit right with my faith. I had to choose one.

The pain of losing my son was unbearable. It brought me to my knees. No one was there to hear my sobs as I knelt there with my arms wrapped around me. Yet I felt the strong presence of my faith within my grief.

One that was going to either kill me or change me. I decided that I needed to change and moved forward in my life.

The faith that I found was different from what was taught to me in residential school. It was loving. I became a loving mother. It was giving. I gave what little I had back to my community. My faith didn't hurt the ones that I loved. My faith strengthened me. As I learned to live with my faith, it taught


me that what I learned in residential school was not faith but a doctrine of beliefs for that time period. It was to kill the Indian in the child.

I found that I could teach my children my Indigenous ways and still be a woman of faith. My son learned the beauty of listening to his grandparents talk in their language. They took him fishing and taught him the ways of the water and land. Faith was being with family and sharing your teachings. My son was able to hear his grandparents pray in our language.

My faith helped me in my darkest moments. Like when my oldest son Tyler passed away a few years ago. I recalled the first week that I had to spend alone after the funeral. I was alone with my grief. The pain of losing my son was unbearable. It brought me to my knees. No one was there to hear my sobs as I knelt there with my arms wrapped around me. Yet I felt the strong presence of my faith within my grief.


I spent the next weeks and months praying and reading the Bible. In my weakest moments, my faith held me up. I am an alcoholic and there were thoughts of drinking the pain away. Thoughts that I would push away.

Now that sharp pain of losing my son has passed. I consider that time to be a true blessing. Never has my faith been so strengthened and tested.

My faith is my closest friend. Not what I thought it was when I was taught as a child. This is different. My faith takes away the pain and fills the loneliest parts of my spirit. It is healing. It allows me to be who I am, an Indigenous woman of faith. 


Vivian Ketchum is Anishinabe of Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation, outside of Kenora, Ont. She lives in Winnipeg.

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Life

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FAMILY

Three Ways to Curb Sibling Rivalry

Simple steps to a healthier home. *by* MATTHEW RUTTAN

If you have kids, you've probably thought about sibling rivalry. It's kind of like debt or a skin rash: You don't think about it until you have to deal with it yourself! Plus, parenting zips along so fast it's not like any of us have a week to lock ourselves in a library or attend a conference on parenting strategies. >

FAMILY, continued

To save you the trouble, I've pulled together a few tips I've heard from others, a few practices my wife and I have tried, and a few insights I've read. Hopefully they will help with a healthier, happier home.

1. Be Fair

The word "rivalry" suggests competition. And competition has to do with edging someone else out of the way so you can get a prize.

We compete for the first place ribbon because there's only one first place ribbon.

Sometimes kids try to compete for a parent's affection because they think it's in limited supply.

So be fair. Maybe you already are. If so, that's great. But make sure you are showing your children that you love and support them equally.

You need to be honest. Sometimes it's easier to show love to the child whose personality is most like yours. "Of course," you say to yourself, "I love them the same." I'm sure you do. But maybe you don't *show* it. Maybe you're subtly favouring the introvert. Or maybe you're only really encouraging to the one who likes the same sports as you. Just take a look at how you show your love. Are you consistent?

2. Build Team

Recently I was talking to a friend, Chantal Hewitt, about sibling rivalry. She said something I think is really insightful: "Something to always remind our children is that friends will come and go but siblings will always be there—to support them, love them, and be their best friend." Well said.

Chantal said it helps to teach children to focus on their siblings' successes and to prioritize the idea of "team" in the family. That naturally neutralizes rivalry. As she says it: "How can we

compete with those on our team?"

My wife Laura is also really good at this in our own home. A while ago she started the "I caught you!" chart. Basically when we catch any one of our three children doing something kind or helpful for one another, they get a sticker on the chart. When they reach 30 stickers we all go out for ice cream. (If you're a zombie and ice cream isn't your thing, or if your kids are older, just choose something else—maybe bowling or pizza.)

What we found is that they start to work with each other—and cheer for each other!—instead of competing. It's a huge team-builder.

Another way to build team is to assign chores and distribute them evenly. Kids need to learn that parents don't serve them, and that their siblings don't serve them. We all contribute to the family team.

Plus, a regular ritual of praying with and for siblings is a home run. Sometimes a prayer like "Help my sister deal with the mean boy at school" or "Make my brother's cut heal" hits an invisible switch in a child's mind that says we're all riding on the same bus.

3. Cultivate Gratitude

I passionately believe that gratitude is fertilizer for health in every area of your life. And it's true for your children, too.

In their new book, *Small Matters: How Churches and Parents Can Raise Up World-Changing Children*, Greg Nettle and Jimmy Mellado offer this perspective-shifting insight: "There are dangers and diseases that stem from poverty, and there are dangers and diseases that stem from prosperity." Wow.

And they know what they're talking about. Jimmy Mellado runs Compassion International, an organization that works to release children from

poverty around the world. In his own family, his kids partnered with children of similar ages in developing countries. I recently heard at the Orange Conference in Atlanta that "one of the best ways to convince a child or teen they are significant is to give them something significant to do."

When Mellado's children help, they feel significant. But it's more than that. They *are* helped significantly.


They argue that first-world kids are also "at risk." One of these risks is a prosperity side effect called ingratitude.

In your home, cultivate gratitude. This grows when children are somehow involved in serving others. It gives them perspective. Maybe it's sponsoring a child, handing out sandwiches, or cleaning up the neighbourhood.

It also happens when you make gratitude a habit. Why not have a gratitude conversation when you're eating dinner? Or maybe when you're bored in the car, start going around in a circle saying something you're thankful for. The first person who can't think of something has to fold the next load of laundry! And maybe if your kids catch you being ungrateful, you have to give them 25 cents. (Nothing like putting your money where your mouth is!)

A Healthier Home

Life can be messy. But that doesn't have to include frequent bowls of spaghetti dumped over one another's head. Unless, of course, you're into that.

So remember: When it comes to minimizing sibling rivalry, be fair, build "team" and cultivate gratitude, and you'll be taking your next best step to a healthier home. 

Rev. Matthew Ruttan is minister at Westminster, Barrie, Ont. He blogs at presbyterianrecord.ca.



MEDITATION

Traditions

Thoughts on Romans 14:8-13. *by* LORNA BALL

PRESBYTERIANS are known for our traditions—our unique way of church government and our keeping of scripture. We are known for the tradition of “we’ve always done it this

way.” Yet as a denomination we frequently forget the second part of our tradition—the part that asks: What do I find important in the church that I want to bring forward and hand over to the next generation? ➤

MEDITATION, continued

When any disagreement begins in a congregation with the words “but we’ve always done it this way,” we need to find a child still in elementary school. We must look into their eyes and ask ourselves: How will what I believe affect this child? In my belief, what do I want to bring forward and give as a gift—a tradition—to the next generation? What kind of an example of the love of Christ am I providing for this child?

Looking into the eyes of a child, we need to ask ourselves if statements like “I am leaving the church if ...” will be an example of a healthy relationship for them. Statements that come with a timeline and seek a decision based on fear are not healthy in growing any relationship—not in your own family nor in your church family.

At some point in our lives, we have all been wounded in our hearts. Some wounds are still present and some wounds have softened over time. But the wounds make us who we are. Through being wounded, we learn forgiveness and reconciliation.


The same is true in our church.

We need to grow old together as a denomination in God’s love by sharing the love of Christ with each other and together healing not only our own wounds but those of the world. It is all these things that cause us as a denomination to grow, to be reformed, to come into a fuller relationship with God.

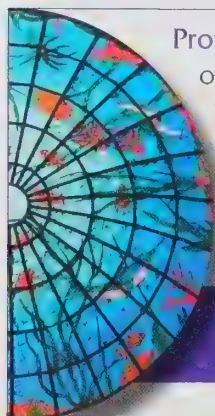
The church has hurt us at some point in our past (or present), but we must realize that we have a common denomination... a common humanity... a common forgiveness... a common relationship in the love of Christ.

This is the way of God. If we forget this then we are a broken people who cannot bring the love and healing of God into this world. And that is the day we all die of the cold.

We must remember that we need each other. We must remember to not judge or condemn. We must remember to listen to others and to listen to what God has called others to be. We need to seek hearts of forgiveness and compassion. We need to grow old together as a denomination in God’s love by sharing the love of Christ with each other and together healing not only our own wounds but those of the world. It is all these things that cause us as a denomination to grow, to be reformed, to come into a fuller relationship with God. This is the tradition—the gift—that must be passed on to the next generation.

Great God, we thank you for our tradition, and our way of passing on your Good News to the next generation. Through your love, enable us to always listen to each other. This we ask in Jesus’ name. Amen. 

Lorna Ball is a member of St. Andrew’s, Brandon, Man.



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PWS&D Developments

The quarterly newsletter for Presbyterian World Service & Development • 2016 Edition, Issue 3

ABRIDGED
VERSION



STEREA JAWA IS A MOTHER AND A WIFE, AND HAS OFTEN worried about how she would care for her family living in northern Malawi. Expenses for food, school and other household needs often exceeded her small income. Her position is not unlike that of many other women in her community who struggle to meet their family's daily needs, as well as ensure that their children have bright futures.

In Malawi, over 67 per cent of a population of almost 18 million is under the age of 25. Youth unemployment and underemployment are significant issues, so creating sustainable and vibrant livelihoods for youth, women and men is a hugely significant endeavor.

Presbyterian World Service & Development, with support from Global Affairs Canada, is working to improve the economic outlook for nearly 50,000 Malawians, with a special focus on young women and men. Through the Government of Canada-supported *Building Sustainable Livelihoods* program, women like Sterea have joined together in their communities to learn, save and grow.

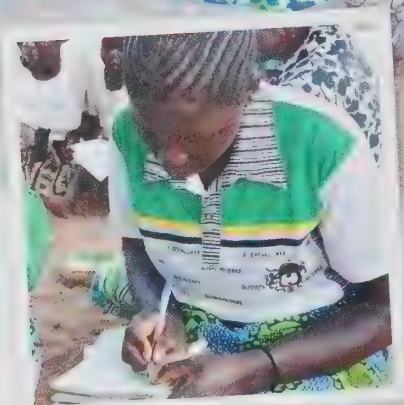
PWS&D partners in Malawi are helping build sustainable livelihoods and combat poverty by promoting education and vocational training, work opportunities, financial management, and encouraging healthy practices.

Community and volunteer groups form a central part of the program—women's savings groups or committees supporting the care of orphans and ►



PHOTOS: PWS&D AND PAUL JEFFREY

A savings group gathers for their weekly meeting.



***“I have benefited a lot,
but my family has
benefited even more.”***

vulnerable children. These groups, after receiving training through the program, are becoming lasting structures to meet their community's needs.

Stereia's group has greatly benefited from the training they received. “We were first worried when we formed the group about how the money would come. But now that we have been trained in resource mobilization, we know how to raise the money we need in order to grow the capital of our group.”

With this capital, individual members of the group apply for loans, which they would never be eligible for from a traditional financial institution. Borrowing sums as little as \$10 CAD, women are transforming their family's futures.

Anna Jere, another mother participating in the program, learned how to analyze the local market to evaluate what type of business she should start. After completing her assessment, she knew that by making and

selling samosas, she would be able to realize a good profit. Since receiving her small initial loan she has been able to both repay the loan and make a profit. Anna is now planning how to expand her business.

A Continued Refrain

Women across northern Malawi tell similar stories. In community after community, women share that their family is now able to eat three meals a day, that they can afford soap to improve hygiene, that they can pay fees related to their children's education, and that they can also assist others in their community who are in need.

Apart from the economic benefits that the women find through their group membership, they also experience social benefits. Women share that they have seen changes in the way they live everyday in their family units and the way they interact with their spouses.

Because these women are actively contributing to the family income, it has allowed for increased participation in household decision-making. Husbands and wives consult each other on how to go about taking care of their household and women are free to make decisions on what to buy without seeking consent from their husband.

Jen Msiska shares how being part of the group has changed her relationship with her husband. He was hesitant at first about her involvement, but is now thrilled. With the small loan Jen received she has been growing and selling tomatoes and maize. She has been

SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Between 2012-2018, the Government of Canada, through Global Affairs Canada, is providing \$931,000 to PWS&D for the Building Sustainable Livelihoods program in Malawi. The Canadian government funds 75 per cent of this program, while PWS&D is responsible for the remaining 25 per cent. This funding helps to maximize Presbyterian contributions to PWS&D.

able to repay her initial loan and buy sleeping mats for her children so they are not sleeping on the ground. Jen is also able to buy salt and oil without having to ask her husband for the funds.

Jen and Anna agree with Stereia's feelings when she shares, “I can now meet my family's basic needs. I have benefited a lot, but my family has benefited even more.”

By investing in holistic community development that addresses the economic, social and health issues in communities, PWS&D is helping create new opportunities for the future and is helping people support themselves over the long-term as they work to create a sustainable, compassionate and just world. ■

Your gifts to this program are maximized by contributions from the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada.



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BE CHURCH

Siloé Grows in Montreal

A community full of joy and promise. *by* KEITH RANDALL

LA COMMUNAUTÉ Chrétienne Siloé was born in Montreal's Chinese Presbyterian Church just six years ago with five families attending its first service. Today, Siloé is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Canada with 234 members.

Siloé, the gospel of John tells us, was where Jesus sent the blind man after rubbing mud on his eyes "saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.'" These were waters the historian Josephus called "sweet and abundant."

The vision that framed the birth and growth of this new congregation belongs to Rev. Eloi Agbanou. Born in Benin, he found his calling as a teenager leading children's worship activities and studied theology in Cameroon, graduating in 1986. After a two-year apprenticeship, he was asked about his goals.

"I wanted to work with people who were suffering," he recalls. "I worked in hospitals and prisons and with refugees from a civil war in Chad."

After that, he approached an association

of French, Swiss and Italian Protestant churches and others that arose from their missionary activities in Africa. That led to a chaplaincy at *Les Editions Clé*, a leading religious publisher, and to a college chaplaincy where he met Laurentine whom he married in 1991. Another college called, followed by another parish as youth pastor, teaching lay studies, and making prison visits.

"Let's say I was very busy," he says.

Finally ordained in 1997, he was recruited to launch a new parish in Douala, Cameroon's largest and richest city. It grew from a classroom with 25 faithful to 310 members in a new building by 2002 where, he chuckles, they still award the Agbanou Trophy to deserving members. More studies in Geneva were followed by another parish and a return to Benin to complete a master's degree in sociology.

He tentatively planned to teach in the university in Cameroon but Laurentine proposed moving to Canada. Encouraged by ➤

BE CHURCH, continued

church officials, they arrived with their four children in July, 2009. Welcomed by a family that attended Kensington Presbyterian Church, Agbanou felt right at home.

"The Cameroon Evangelical Church resembles the Canadian Presbyterian Church quite closely in both organization and theology," he says.

After approval by the Presbyterian Church in Canada's Committee on Education and Reception in 2011, church officials wondered where he'd find a francophone congregation to serve.

"I replied that I'd take on the mission to gather Protestant francophones from Africa. I started contacting churches in Cameroon and immigrant associations in Canada."

Siloé was accepted as a congregation by Montreal presbytery effective January, 2015; its first elders were elected the following May. The call to Rev. Agbanou was, unsurprisingly, approved in April this year. Rev. Joel Coppieters is interim moderator.

"It's pretty encouraging," he says. "It's always tricky bringing a zealous congregation together with the *Book of Forms*, doing things, as we say, decently and in good order without losing enthusiasm. Their depth of involvement is really refreshing."

Among those first five families was Médard Kouatchou who had also arrived from Cameroon in 2009.

"I knew Rev. Agbanou in Douala," he recalls, "and the Cameroon church told us how to contact him here."

He recalls, too, a 2010 meeting with Rev. Doug Robinson of the Montreal presbytery that granted mission status to the new community and the several churches that hosted Siloé until they landed in the chapel at Presbyterian College.

"We're comfortable in the Presbyterian Church," he says. "It's very

nostalgic to worship in the language of our homeland. I'm proud of our progress and for the support from Toronto and the presbytery."

He lists Siloé's goals: to gather francophone Christians to worship Jesus Christ in the great diversity of African

"It's always tricky bringing a zealous congregation together with the *Book of Forms*"

culture, to ensure the Christian education of their children, to welcome other Presbyterians and sister churches, to shelter families in love, charity, sharing and Christian morality, and provide all the sacraments and worship of the Christian church.

Sunday services, overflowing into the lobby, are joyous occasions, children very much welcome, beginning with a member-led Bible study, a celebration of newcomers, an excellent youth choir whose hymns echo with African rhythms, and lots of post-service food. A visitor is struck by the congregation itself: well dressed, often in colourful African clothing, well-educated with many professionals, and young—not many grey hairs here.

Nadia Toghua is clerk of session.

"Maybe I underestimated how important the role is but I try to take it lightly, make sure the work is well done, letters answered promptly, information channelled to committees."

Nadia heard about Siloé through a friend and found the warmth and conviviality she knew at home.

"We stay in touch during the week. In our culture, women hold family and

community together. There are about 90 women in the congregation and a smaller group of about 30 mums do diaconal work, celebrate newborns, visit the sick and families in grief, organize evenings, prepare the worship service, and often are the ones who invite others to join us."


Concern has been expressed about other congregations of newcomers to Canada that have run into difficulties with Presbyterian governance.

"I can understand that, but in our culture, in our history, we don't like failure. If I personally fail, I'd feel I've not lived up to my commitment. It's a point of honour that we do things well. I think it's up to us to show that you can have confidence in us."

A major project is to find a larger site to call home with more visibility, more room, and more flexibility during the week. Another is to raise the profile through their website and distribution of pamphlets to schools and universities. Although Nadia is fluently bilingual, most are not.

"The lack of French documentation in the PCC frustrates a lot of people. There are many Africans and Europeans looking for a francophone church and I believe the church should invest in material in French, whether it's Bibles, hymn books, even the *Book of Forms* and their website. I think it's worthwhile if we want the church to grow."

The last word goes to the pastor. Despite his frustration with the arduous process of negotiating for a new, larger home, Agbanou is optimistic.

"We've developed an evangelism that will assure growth. I think if we can find a building with room for 500, in five years we'll be close to filling it." 

Keith Randall is one of three assessor elders appointed by Montreal presbytery to share Siloé's journey.

Focus

Stories of mission, ministry and community



REFUGEES

Deutsche Post

Do-gooders, Christians and refugees in Germany.

by TODD STATHAM

I SAW A STORE with a sign advertising rentable floor sanding machines: *Fussbodenschleifmaschinenverleih*.

My resolve to improve my German vocabulary falters on such jaw-breaking compound words! But here's another word I've just learned—thankfully one so easy I didn't even need a dictionary to parse it: *Gutmensch*. This word has been all over social media and news programs in the past six months. Literally, it means a "good person," in practice, it means a "do-gooder." As in, "Oh, she's such a *gutmensch*, always helping out at the refugee centre."

This word is all the rage, of course, because of the refugee crisis in Europe. Around 1.5 million people have claimed asylum in Europe in the past 18 months, pouring in from the Middle East and North Africa >

REFUGEES, continued

over roads and oceans, climbing walls and crawling through fences. Around one million refugees have entered Germany, with half already registered for asylum. If you want to get an idea of what it's like here, take the 25,000 refugees that Canada took in, increase it at least 40-fold, then squeeze all those people into a country one-third the size of Ontario. Yes, Germany has become Europe's *gutmenschen*.

Our neighbouring countries tried to dam their borders when the human stream from war-torn Syria became a flood. But Germany has remained open, and even small towns here are getting accustomed to seeing women in hijabs standing mystified in the grocery aisle before 30 types of cheese, and dark-haired kids in otherwise blond and blue-eyed kindergarten classrooms.

Austria, Hungary and Poland have all veered hard to the right of late, their politicians scoring points with voters by playing up the threat of a foreign horde to western Christian civilization—an argument as old as Europe itself. The German chancellor, Angela Merkel, on the other hand, has insisted against critics at home and abroad that Germany cannot turn away refugees. Her bold decision, which has already proved politically costly for the ruling Christian Democrats, seems to be motivated at least in part by her own upbringing in a Lutheran manse. So Merkel too is a *gutmenschen*.

Given Germany's track record in the 20th century, it might be hard for a lot of Canadians to begin thinking of *die Deutschen* as do-gooders. But a few events in Germany's terrible past century suggest why they're taking leadership in Europe's refugee crisis.

For one thing, Germany has its own tragic experience of refugees. After the Second World War, the Allies wiped the eastern province of Prussia off the map:

The throngs of refugees seeking asylum in Germany typically take faith a whole lot more seriously than we do.

10 million Germans fled homelands carved up between Soviet-controlled Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Baltic nations. Many older folks in the northern province of Schleswig-Holstein where we live recall a Prussian family squeezing into a spare bedroom during the late 1940s as they awaited resettlement; my wife's father is one of many whose birthplace is no longer within German borders. It's a fact little known in North America. But after what Germany did in the war, what sympathy could they expect for their own refugees, or for the 600,000 who died trying to get west?

Second, everyone here remembers when their land was split by a wall put up to keep people in, and this memory chills many (including Merkel, who grew up in communist East Germany) when they see fences put up to keep people out. Politicians, church leaders and others urging a generous refugee policy make their case by reminding Germans that their bitter past should soften their hearts for present kindness.

Still, *gutmenschen* needs to be spoken with a slight sneer to be said correctly. And this reveals a deep ambiguity. Most Germans remained convinced that opening their country to refugees was the right thing to do. But most are flummoxed by what to do with the million

newcomers who neither speak their language nor share their culture. And open borders doesn't necessarily mean open arms. From talking with friends and neighbours, I get the sense that most like the idea of welcoming refugees to their country—but welcoming them to my neighbourhood? Imagine how friends of ours felt when they dropped off their son at school one morning to find 200 new students from Syria and Morocco massing on the playground, and their own kid stuck in a portable thrown up on the soccer pitch. And of course there is a large and loud minority who “knew all along” that it was stupid to open Germany's borders, and seize upon every mishap as proof.

A good friend of mine—a real *gutmenschen*, by the way—oversees a refugee centre for the city of Berlin. He texted me the other day frustrated at the outbursts of violence and crime at his centre (including street fights with local fascist thugs) that always prompt complaints to police about those “typically” violent Syrians and “I told you so” media releases from far-right parties like the Alternative für Deutschland. “But if you slept 200 young German or Canadian guys in a room the size of two basketball courts,” he pointed out, “you'd have just as many fights.”

Does the popularity of *gutmenschen* in social media suggest that Germany is second guessing itself? There's real pride among many Germans that their country took in a million refugees, even if many of the same are wondering if it was perhaps naive and worrying about what the future holds.

I get asked by Canadian friends what the church is doing in all this. After all, the church should be the biggest do-gooder of them all, right? I'm never quite sure how to respond. Germany has a state church, and this historic and powerful institution is deeply



Refugees from Syria

integrated into national life and culture (even if most people rarely darken the local church door between their baptism and funeral). Much of the church's work with refugees is being handled within its bureaucratic programs and agencies rather than by congregations themselves, which has the weird effect of making a lot of churchgoers feel like we're doing something really good, without us doing anything at all besides paying our church tax. There are exceptions, though, and we've witnessed firsthand in our local Lutheran church and our daughter's Girl Guides group some serious effort to get congregations actively involved in integrating refugees into the community.

A bigger problem, in my view, is this: for most Germans, being a Christian means nothing more than being a

gut Mensch. I've heard neighbours and my students express the hope that in due time the refugees will "become like us." In other words, they'll come to adopt our liberal northern European values and dilute their Islam so that it's as benign as Germany's national religion, Christianity. Folks here might be in for a surprise! There is a well-known saying among scholars of religion: "every migrant is a missionary." This saying expresses the fact that most migrants from the Global South not only keep their faith when they come to northern countries like Canada or Germany, they spread it. The throngs of refugees seeking asylum in Germany typically take faith a whole lot more seriously than we do, whether they're Muslim (the vast majority) or Christian—and they'll probably continue to do so.

Now, this isn't to say that refugees won't in time integrate into Germany. They surely will, but there's going to be give and take from both sides. While it's hard to foresee what this give and take will look like, my hunch is that "Christian" Germany would benefit from real contact and real conversation with these newcomers for whom faith means more than being a *gut Mensch*. I wonder if the same would be true in Canada? ☛

Rev. Dr. Todd Statham served with the PCC's International Ministries from 2011-2014. He lives with his wife and three children near Hamburg, Germany, and lectures part-time (in very poor German) at the Institut für Theologie und Religionspädagogik, Leuphana Universität Lüneburg.

KING JAMES VERSION

PULPIT BIBLE

(1717 "VINEGAR" BIBLE)

PLEASE PUT WHITE GLOVES ON WHEN
TURNING PAGES



Rev. Dr. Joseph McLelland

Photos by Andrew Faiz



Walk With God

A conversation with Joseph McLelland.

by **DEREK MACLEOD**

It would take pages to list Rev. Dr. Joseph McLelland's accomplishments. Let it be noted, succinctly, that he has been a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada for nearly 70 years, was the Moderator of the General Assembly in 1985, has published many books on philosophy and theology, and has been a professor and administrator at Presbyterian College and McGill University, Montreal, for nearly 60 years. He was married to his beloved Audrey for 65 years; she passed away in the spring of 2013. He's now 91—a little slower physically, a little sadder alone, with a mind still active and playful.

Last December the *Record* invited McLelland's former minister, Rev. Derek Macleod, now serving a church in the United States, for a long talk. Over three hours they covered a lot of ground. This is a brief excerpt of that conversation. You can find a longer version on the *Record's* webpage.—*Andrew Faiz*

DEREK MACLEOD: I was your pastor for almost eight years—I need to begin with this story. I was fresh from Knox College ... you invited me to the faculty club at McGill. You told me about life in Montreal in the '50s, the priests walking in their cassocks. We had a meal and halfway through

you slid a book across to me, *The Clown and the Crocodile*. On the inside you inscribed: "To Derek, my minister."

JOSEPH MCLELLAND: There is a marvellous quote by Elie Wiesel: "God made man because He loves stories." I see the Bible as a book of stories. We look at the Bible as a narrative but I see it as an untidy group of stories that follow one another. It's a case of discovering the key story and I found the key story in Abraham and Sarah.

Sarah laughs when she is told she is going to have a baby. She says: "God has brought me laughter and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." She names the baby Laughter, or Isaac.

I feel that the narrow gate of laughter is what every Christian has to come through. But instead of laughing with Abraham, we tend to laugh at God because He gives promises.

MACLEOD: I think what we're talking about is what it means to be in a relationship with God. You see this as a very deep and broad relationship.

MCLELLAND: I see humility as leading to laughter. It can >

FEATURE, continued

lead to tears but if we're truly forgiven our sins, then you can laugh forever.

The three great virtues would be faith, love and hope. I hope for the future.

I think we don't spend enough time as Presbyterians talking about the last things. The fundamentalist things like joy, about the glory land and the future.

There are two theories about how God became known as Trinity. One is, you start with God, the Father, and that's the absolute God. From that God are two emanations, the *Logos*, who becomes incarnate, and the Spirit.

But I see a different theory. Among Christian theologians, you start with the specific, which is Jesus of Nazareth, who suddenly appears and is a traumatic experience for his followers. The Church started with Christology and the doctrine of Jesus as the Christ. I don't say Jesus Christ because Christ is a title not a name.

MACLEOD: A divided Christology; for the longest time the Church didn't know where to land because the gospels had different approaches on what it means to be Jesus the Christ.

MCLELLAND: Oh yes, Christology was very mixed. For a while, the Church was Aryan, which means the *Logos* didn't really become Jesus. Which is bad considering what some of the gospels say.

It's pretty hard to get a strong doctrine of incarnation. So, the Christology was pretty divided, especially on how Christ can be both human and divine. They solved that by very intricate doctrine. It says the *Logos* becomes Jesus but not the whole *Logos*.

Luther said the whole *Logos* is in the manger. And Calvin said if he's in the manger, who's running the universe? So, Jesus is only partly in the manger and the rest of him is running the universe. I like that because it means the *Logos* can become incarnate elsewhere.

MACLEOD: Sometimes I hear that ... in letters to the *Record*, for example, that Joe's a heretic. But I think it's not that you have a low theology of things but that you have a very high theology. You're articulating a very high Christology.

MCLELLAND: I had two accusations of heresy from presbyteries that didn't go anywhere, perhaps because of my friends.

Let me say that most Presbyterians are heretics. For example, if you worship Jesus as God, you're a heretic because he's divine but he's not God.

MACLEOD: "Why do you call me good, no one is good except God alone."

MCLELLAND: Orthodoxy really says: You worship the Father through the Son. So, we worship on Sunday God through Jesus the Christ. But when people mistake Jesus for God that's one of the reasons we threw a gauntlet to the atheists because they're right. They're right because that's bad theology.

The first theory is the theory of Jesus as the Christ. And then they developed the theory of God the Father, because with Christology you have to change the doctrine of God. Then the third theory would be the Holy Spirit, which would be everywhere.

MACLEOD: Can you talk more about the omnipotence of God through the Holy Spirit?

MCLELLAND: First of all, the omnipotence of God is a mistake. Because if God is omnipotent, He is also impotent. And this is where the atheists have us; if you say that God can do anything God wants, that's a real heresy because it's making God into Zeus; it's taking power from physics as the analogy of God.

The Fathers were always careful, especially Thomas Aquinas. He starts with: Can you prove the existence of God by argument? And he gives what I call the Five Ways, but he does that in one little article of this huge *summa* and afterwards he says: Of course, we don't know what God is, we only know what God is not.

From then on, it's negative theology and that means you detach from these false ideas. Generally speaking, omnipotence is always qualified by things God cannot do. He cannot do things that are logical mistakes.

There is a famous parable called The Stone—can God make a stone so big that God cannot lift it? Philosophers still talk about that. (So, you can be still ignorant after being a professional philosopher.) We had that idea, it doesn't make sense, it's a silly thing and the atheists seize on that and quite rightly because Christians still believe that. So, if people believe in the naive idea of omnipotence, they're asking for trouble.

MACLEOD: I think we're in the midst of really important thought you're helping us with: understanding and in fact rejecting the omnipotence of God. Is the sovereignty of God an antidote to the omnipotence of God or how does it work?

MCLELLAND: The key analogy of God is love. God is a living God. It means that God is not simply a fix in the sky, making decisions and taking this person and leaving that one, causing a hurricane, causing a fire and all that; it's nonsense. As a sovereign one, He exerts his sovereignty through love and therefore love would be the essential building block of the universe. All things are created out of love and all things start from Christology, that's the model.



Rev. Dr. Joseph McLelland at
Presbyterian College, Montreal

If we start with Jesus, then Jesus as the Christ is the model for God, and whatever you say, Jesus must be the test of God: would Jesus do that, would Jesus say that? So it's nonsense to talk about God causing things like earthquakes. Acts of God, as the insurance company calls them, are not acts of God.

MACLEOD: An omnipotent God is a very cruel God. So, what is a sovereign God?

MCLELLAND: The sovereign God would be a God who exerts His power through love—and this is the Holy Spirit again—and who is therefore a God of truly all things, not that God created them all necessarily, although that's true, but if God created everything out of love, then we have to change our idea of God pretty drastically: to a God who loves people, suffers with people and changes with people. God suffers more now after the Holocaust than God did before.

Crucifixion is the name of God. It's always a story of the crucified God. The cross therefore comes alive.

MACLEOD: I'd also like people to know that along with the title of professor, you would also claim heretic and you would also claim lover; that you're a lover of God, a lover of people. And I would not like to dismiss your love with Audrey.

MCLELLAND: Yes, we'd had 65 years of happily married life. She was a great woman who was more than supportive. She really liked being a pastor's wife and unfortunately I've turned it into academic life, which was a little different.

MACLEOD: I think we take very seriously covenant theology, started with Abraham. Abraham and God, Abraham and Sarah.

Your covenant with Audrey ... when you become one, there's real power in that. What happens when one dies? How did you face this?

MCLELLAND: I wasn't prepared for the fact that death is such a kind of ending. I felt like it was like hitting a wall and I had to rethink a lot of things.

I realized at funerals we all sever the body and soul. During our lives we don't separate body and spirit, we live in unity. The Bible teaches us that God created us as a unity.

There is a sense, very philosophical, in which your self-identity allows you to regard your body as something you possess. But the complete split, which we find at funerals, is to say at the least misleading. Here she is in the box, and people are saying, "No, she's on her way to a better land" and so on. It's really difficult for a Christian to accept, or should be. If we're created in body-soul unity, at death, we die as body.

I had a harder time with Audrey's soul carrying on and waiting for me. This is where hope comes in. I wish we could be more like the fundamentalist students who sing about the glory land.

John Calvin has one of the best answers I know. The first theological thing he ever wrote was called *Psychopannychia*, which means "Soul sleep." He said: If you have walked with God, death does not affect that walk, you carry on. At the end, there would be a general resurrection where everybody gets together, so to speak. It's not bad. It raises other questions but nevertheless his idea is that faith is union with Christ; death does not destroy that. ☩

Rev. Derek Macleod is an associate pastor at Myers Park, North Carolina.



it's almost time to Get Creative!

The deadline for the *Record's* 2016 Christmas Art Contest is November 4.

The winning entry will appear on the front cover of the *Presbyterian Record*! And, many others will be featured in the pages of the magazine and on our website. The contest is open to all ages and all styles of art.

- Email a high resolution scan or photograph of your Christmas themed artwork to cwardle@presbyterian.ca

- Or send your artwork on an 8.5"x11" page to:
Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto ON M3C 1J7

- Please be sure to include your name, the church you attend, and your age on the back of each entry,

The deadline is November 4, 2016.



Meeting God and Each Other *at Canada Youth 2016*

by GILLIAN SECORD

Days that open with wacky dancing and end in prayer. Meals spent discussing Bible study and Frisbee games. Evenings filled with worship and cotton candy.


This was Canada Youth, a week-long conference held at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont., where hundreds of young adults from all around the country came to learn leadership skills, worship God, and have lots of fun. It was a way for Presbyterian youth to connect with those their own age—something that might not be available to them as much in their home congregations—and grow together in the Spirit.

Participants could join up in one of three tracks: the Youth Track which focused on small groups and discussions for participants who have graduated Grade 9; the Discipleship Track which focused on challenging youth who had graduated high school to think deeper about God's plan for them; or the Youth Ministry Training Track, which was a way for youth and adults 18 and older to learn more about what it means to be a youth leader.

The theme for the event was "We Are Home,"

and each day was spent looking at another aspect of "home." Whether it was celebrating our home here in Canada, or looking at the situation of refugees without a home, participants were challenged to look at what God's home looked like, and what that meant for them.

While there, the *Record* asked some of the young people and leaders when they had last encountered God in their lives. They were chosen randomly, and their answers offer a small look into each person's spiritual journey. These responses show some of the ways young people are passionate about Christ, and the ways that God is still actively working in our world.

Leaving CY, participants were given a key on a loop of hemp to remind them that they are always welcome in God's house. But they left with much more than that: new friendships, new perspectives and new energy to bring God's house with them wherever they go. 

Gillian Secord was the Record's summer intern. She lives in Newmarket, Ont.



Allison Duncan, Jessica Mills & Rachel Savill



When did you last

DANIEL MCALPINE
Collingwood, Ont.
[I think I have encountered God] probably the whole week at CY. Back at home, I have a tough time with faith and attending regularly, but it's a lot different here. It's like jumping into freezing cold water; you're immersed in God for the entire week instead of being at church for one Sunday and then missing the next week or two. This is a whole week of being at church and being with God, which is really great.

AMANDA HENDERSON-BOLTON, Charlottetown
Our church made a video recently of the past year of our church and youth group, this big compilation of photos and videos from everything we'd done over the year. I saw God in all the memories being played out and seeing all the moments from the community pulling together and it was a really great reminder that God is with us all the time.

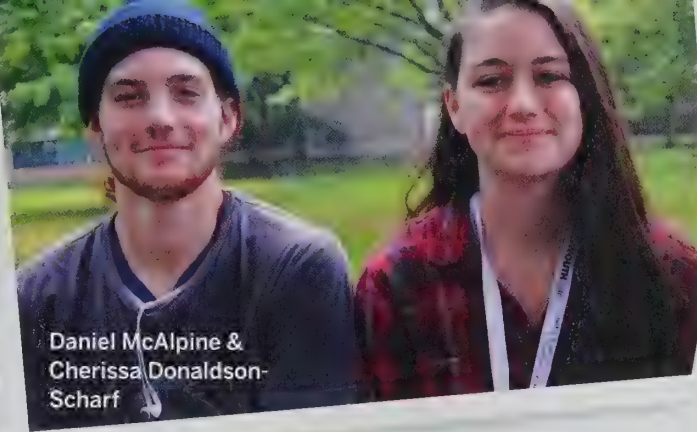
quiet time to connect with God in the hills and meadows up there, and see Him in nature. It's a very different thing than CY, which is very high energy, so it was nice to recharge out there for a bit before coming here.

BARB ACTON
Edmonton
One of the girls in our group here at CY is new to the country, and when we went to check into the airport before our flight over here, it turned out that she didn't have the right ID with her to fly. Annabella, who'd driven us to the

JO COLGAN, Calgary
I was out camping up in the mountains the weekend before CY, and it was a



Dia Erdelyi & Noemi Abram



Daniel McAlpine & Cherissa Donaldson-Scharf

Cover Story



Jasmine Khnanishoo

encounter God?

airport, drove back to her house to get her proper ID, but it still wasn't the right one so she still couldn't get on the flight.

She had to take the girl back home as the rest of us got on the flight and ended up driving us to the airport, driving back for the ID, then back to the airport, then back again with the girl, going the next day and driving a bunch of kids to a camp, and then driving the girl back to the airport. Finally they were able to get a paper to let her fly. It was just so kind of her to do all that extra driving when she didn't have to.

JULIA-DON EDWARDS
Edmonton
I just graduated high school this year from a performing arts K-12 school. I was there a lot, especially for shows and rehearsals, so it really was my home. God has always worked in my life through theatre and art; I feel His love and grace, the same feeling as being at church. My last week of school was full of those God moments as I said goodbye to teachers and peers.

Right now, I'm at a vulnerable place where God is working in me in different ways than He normally would. I'm mourning that

period in my life, but with God, I'm not stressed, I'm just allowing it to happen and letting myself feel it.

JASMINE KHANISHOO
Ajax, Ont.
About six months ago, my mom's parents were pretty sick. My mom asked me to pray for them, and I did. Then, a couple weeks later, we heard that their symptoms had gotten better.

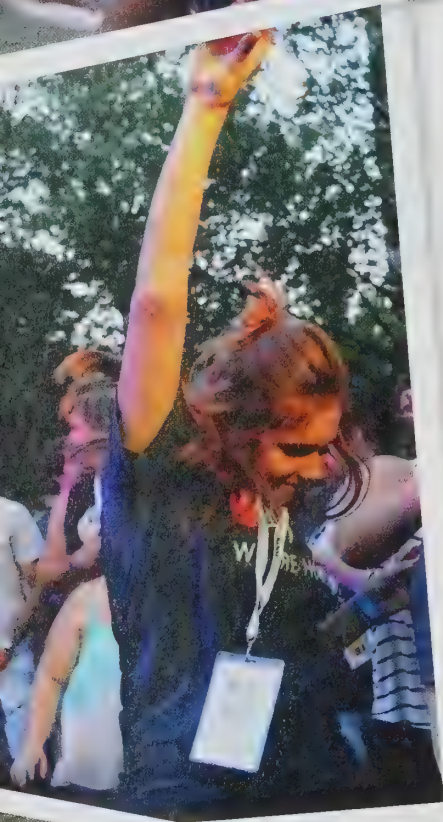
Sometimes I doubt the power of prayer, so it was nice to see it answered like that.

DIA ERDELYI, Hungary
I work in an office,



Barb Acton & Julia-Don Edwards





so coming here has been very spiritually refreshing. Worship has especially been wonderful in helping me with that, and it's also very interesting to see the different liturgy that your church uses in comparison to ours.

NOEMI ABRAM, Hungary
Right before coming here, I was in an intense exam period. By God's grace I managed to get through it, and come to CY. After the loneliness of studying, it's nice to experience togetherness here.

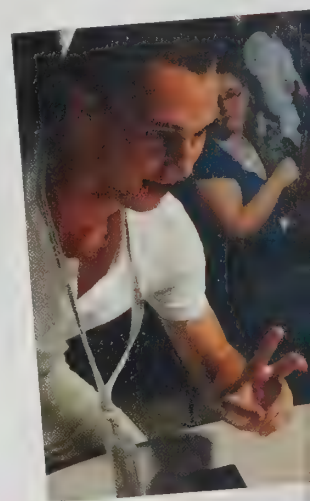
CHARLIE VARNEY, Calgary
I've felt God a lot this week in my casa group [small group]. I'm in a really good group, and everyone in it has been great. We've all been really open when we're talking about our faith, and respectful of what each other has to say,

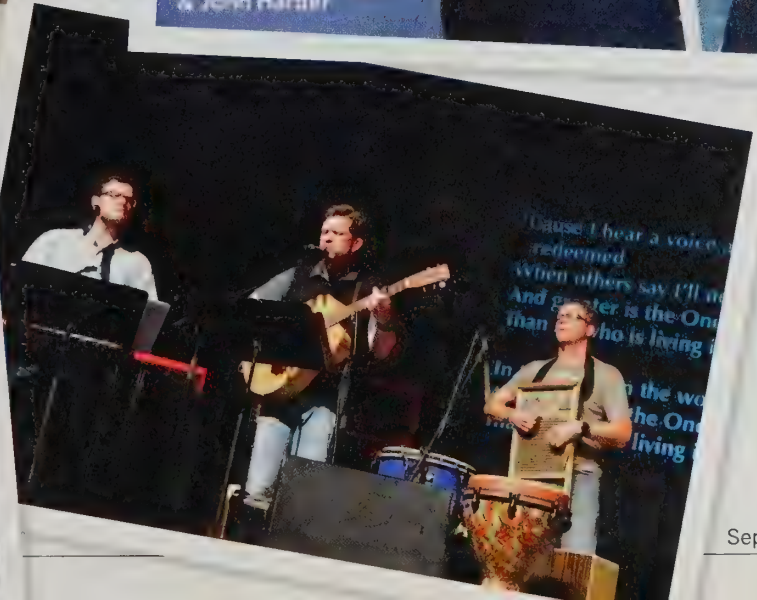
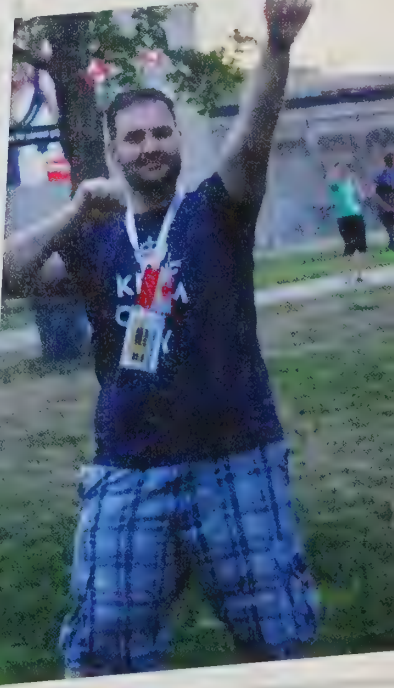
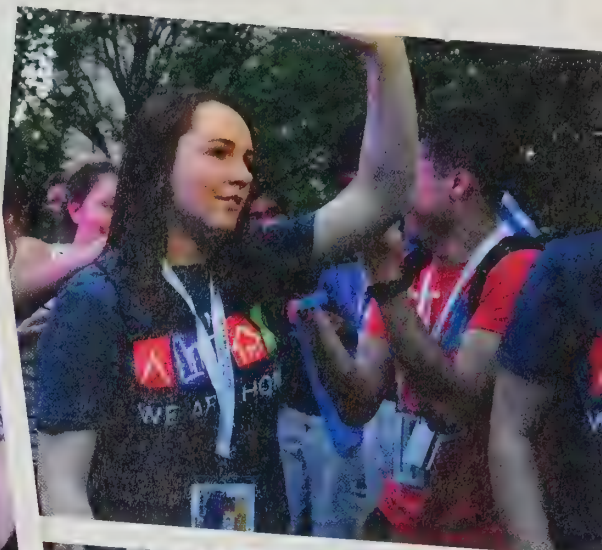
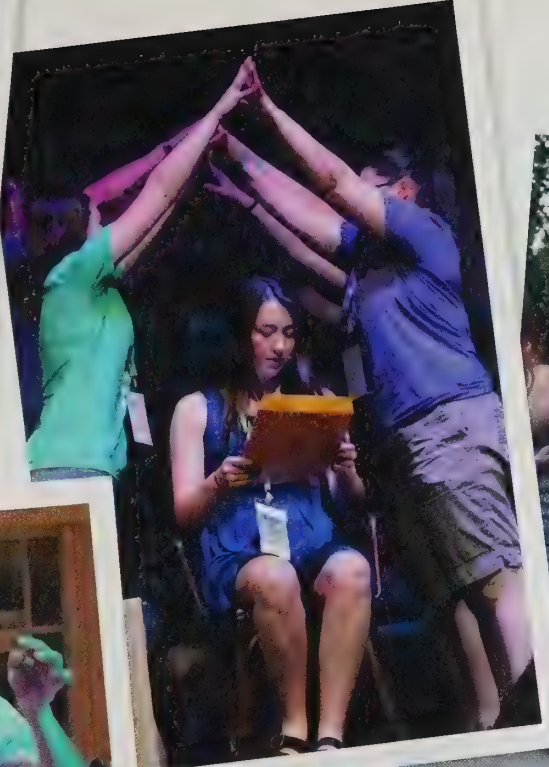
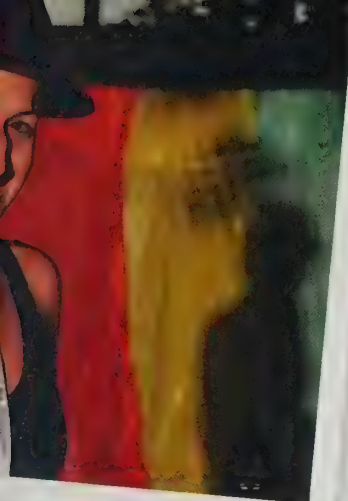
so we've had some cool talks there about God and faith and stuff.

ALLISON DUNCAN, Shedden, Ont.
[I felt God's presence] last night at worship. We do older hymns at my church usually, and that's not bad, but it was really cool to feel the power of everyone singing with one voice here when they cut out the music and it was just our voices.

"That's plain enough, isn't it? You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. God is building a home. He's using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what he is building. He used the apostles and prophets for

the foundation. Now he's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day—a holy temple built by God, all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home."
—Ephesians 2:19-22
(The Message) +





FROM THE MODERATOR

Listen to the Voice

What will Jesus say to you? *by* DOUGLAS ROLLWAGE

A PARISHIONER OF MINE has a collection of old cylinder-type phonograph recordings—rather than the flat discs we are used to, these are sized and shaped like a soft-drink can. You wind the machine up, lower the needle and horn onto the cylinder, and out comes sound! We listened to a cylinder made over a century ago—a comedy routine called “Uncle Josh Buys an Automobile,” by the then-famous Cal Stewart. I’m sure it was funnier then.

Other more familiar voices were also preserved through early recordings, such as Thomas Edison (who advanced the technology), Tolstoy, Tennyson, Florence Nightingale, assorted American presidents, even Queen Victoria. What particularly impresses me about these recordings is how they provide not only a sonic but a physical connection to the people speaking. Their voices caused a needle to vibrate, inscribing physical patterns in the cylinder grooves, which, when replayed, duplicated the sound on the other end—no electronics involved. Even the process of making copies from the original was entirely physical. In our highly digital MP3 world, these old Edison cylinders seem to me like time machines, connecting me tangibly to people in the past.

Imagine if this kind of recording technology existed for many centuries. Whose voice would you most like to hear? An ancestor telling a family story? An artist, Shakespeare say, reading a sonnet? A figure from Christian history? Perhaps Luther or Calvin preaching or teaching?




Whose voice would
you most like to hear?
An ancestor telling a
family story? An artist,
Shakespeare say, reading
a sonnet? A figure
from Christian history?
Perhaps Luther or Calvin
preaching or teaching?

Or how about Jesus? Can you imagine hearing the voice of Jesus? Wouldn’t you give anything to hear that voice speaking to you?

Well, the good news is the voice of Jesus was recorded using the newest and most advanced technology of the day—a format called the gospels.

Comprising greatest hits collections of the words and deeds of Jesus, compiled by those close to him, and authenticated by those who knew him best, the gospels have carried the voice of Jesus throughout time and across continents in countless languages and editions. When you read the gospels, when you listen to their words, it is the voice of Jesus you hear in the most original source available to us.

Some tried to mimic the voice of Jesus with gospels of their own invention, but those who knew first-hand the authentic voice quickly discounted them and they fell into well-deserved obscurity. Others, to this day, attempt to discredit the gospels as inaccurate and far-removed from the original voice, compromised in quality by errors in transmission and manipulation of the original Master. However, as Emil Brunner pointed out, when playing an old phonograph record of a great voice like Caruso, replete with scratches, clicks and pops due to age and wear, only a fool listens to just the clicks and pops and misses hearing Caruso altogether.

There are countless voices clamouring for attention in our world. Why not take time to listen for the voice of Jesus through reading the gospels on your own or with others through Bible study? What will the voice of Jesus say to you? 

Rev. Douglas Rollwage is minister at Zion, Charlottetown. This month’s column is adapted from a talk given at Canada Youth 2016.

People & Places

Find more online at presbyterianrecord.ca

Photographs can be uploaded at presbyterianrecord.ca.



REFORMED CHURCH SECONDARY SCHOOL, NAGYBEREG, UKRAINE

The Reformed Church Secondary School in Nagyberég held this year's English summer camp from June 13-18. There were 10 teachers (two from the USA, one from Canada) and several assistants. Two former students—now teachers—taught grammar and music, and organized games and sports activities. The 124 students, divided into groups, attended five lessons per day. Grammar, vocabulary, Christian music and world cultures were taught; David and Anna Pándy-Szekeres, PCC mission workers, focused on teaching Bible stories, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, the Ten Commandments and prayer in English.



BETHEL, SCOTSBURN, N.S.

Twenty-five young people from Bethel's youth groups, plus Kim Webster, the church's Christian education worker, and three faithful chaperones (not pictured) headed to Sherbrooke Lake Camp near Chester, N.S., on the May long weekend for the Presbyterian Atlantic Youth Synod Event (or PAYS for short). The bus was generously provided by the session through the church's Youth and Mission Fund.



CAMP DOUGLAS, ROBERTS CREEK, B.C.

In June about 30 campers ranging from 20-something to 90-something gathered at Camp Douglas for the 35th anniversary of the Ladies' Retreat. The event draws participants from a number of churches, mostly in the Vancouver lower mainland. This year they explored the theme of "Unopened Gifts" with speaker Rev. Wendy Adams (far left).

THE OTHER SIX DAYS

Biblical Bathrooms

Plus some tunes and a translation. *by* **BRADLEY CHILDS**

MUSIC

If you use christianradio.com, stream K-Love or have listened to Christian radio in the past four months or so, this name will be pretty well known to you. If not, it's time you heard it: Lauren Daigle. Trust me, you should check out her music. Daigle is a native of Lafayette, Louisiana, and like most professional singer-songwriters these days, she grew up singing in church. But Lauren hardly stopped there. A few years ago she even tried out for *American Idol*. And she went pretty far, too. She's also had a few good hits in the past, including "How Can It Be." But if I'm being honest I never saw anything that special about her until her recent single dropped. Her new song is called "Trust in You" and it's excellent. Hey, I like it and my favourite music is about as far from her style as possible. I like symphonic metal. In other words, it's got broad appeal!

FIND IT @ laurendaigle.com/site

TOILETS?

I get it; this is an odd one and some will find it undignified. Perhaps it is. But it's also sort of interesting. See, there is that famous scene in the Bible where David cuts a piece off of King Saul's garment while he is being hunted by Saul and his men (1 Samuel 24). In the King James Bible it says that Saul touched his cloak to his sandals (or "covered his feet"). Modern translations of course usually do away with the attempt to give a word for word type of rendering for the Hebrew and instead they just tell us what

Usually it's smearing dung talk but sometimes, as in the case of Ehud, it's actually really important to understand what ancient toilets and bathroom habits were like in order to fully understand the story.

touching your robe to your sandals means. They tell us that... you know... he's doing "his business."

The Bible of course is oddly full of toilet talk. From Ehud dispatching that large man whilst he was on the can (Judges 3:21-22) to Deuteronomy 23:13's instructions for the old number two while at camp. It's all over the place. Usually it's smearing dung talk but sometimes, as in the case of Ehud, it's actually really important to understand what ancient toilets and bathroom habits were like in order to fully understand the story.

And that's where the good folks at Toilet-Guru.com and biblical scholars' and archeologists' worlds collide. It's fascinating stuff.

FIND IT @ toilet-guru.com/biblical_new.php

BIBLE TRANSLATION

The Purified Translation of the Bible came out some time ago but never got much traction. Though to be fair, it probably has a lot to do with the hobbyhorse issue for which the translation was first created. In any case, the Purified Bible was translated by Dr. Stephen Mills Reynolds who by most accounts is a respectable scholar. Reynolds even worked on the New International Version of the Bible. And this new translation of his does some things amazingly well. For example, it uses apostrophes in order to show when the word "you" was originally found in the singular or plural form, which can have huge implications on a text. Who is told that their body is a temple? Is it the individual? Is it a collection of people? Doesn't it mean something different if it's a people rather than a person? I think so. These things are important. The translation is quite unique and might I say "masterful" in that respect. But it's in the central thrust that things get odd.

See, as the name suggests, this translation "purifies" all the wine into juice. The reason: Reynolds does not believe that the Bible ever advocates the consumption of alcohol. He believes all references to wine, beer and hard alcohol are actually references to other things. So in the Purified Translation, it's all Welches. Still, this New Testament is dirt cheap and pretty cool.

FIND IT @ amazon.ca 

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at Fairview, Vancouver.

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Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Kay Diviney; 514-842-3431; assocminister@standrewstpaul.com; see also stcolumba.ca.

Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

Caledon, Claude; Part-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Rebekah Mitchell, 44 Church St. E., Brampton, ON L6V 1G3; 647-969-5456; mitchr@gmail.com; congregational profile available at claudechurch.com/ministry-opportunity.html.
Guelph, Duff's; seeking a forward-thinking full-time minister to provide strong leadership, preach to the practicalities and encourage new forms of worship, music and ministry; Interim Moderator Rev. Bill Bynum, c/o Duff's Presbyterian Church, 319 Brock St. S., Guelph ON N1H 6H9; congregation's profile available on church's website, the Ministry & Church Vocations website and from the Interim Moderator.

Scarborough, Melville; an established and vibrant congregation has an immediate opening for an organist/pianist/choir director; Chair Personnel Committee, c/o Melville Presbyterian Church, 70 Old Kingston Rd., Scarborough ON M1E 3J5; 416-283-7719 (fax); melville_church@bellnet.ca; copy of posting available through church office at 416-283-3703.

Streetsville (Mississauga), St. Andrew's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Gale Macdonald, 1338 Clarkson Rd. N., Mississauga, ON L5J 2W5; 905-822-8911; revgalemacdonald@gmail.com.

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Innerkip, Innerkip; near Woodstock is a thriving congregation seeking an executive pastor who is a strategic thinker with the ability to lead, encourage and celebrate an extremely gifted staff of eight. Session is policy, vision oriented and committed to the historic living gospel of Jesus Christ; for a job description please send your profile or resume to innpresb@execulink.com or stan.cox@sympatico.ca.

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Simcoe, St. Paul's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Stanley Cox, 65 Tan Ave., Waterford, ON NOE 1Y0; 519-443-4798; stan.cox@sympatico.ca; sppc@kwic.com; visit website stpaulssimcoe.com.

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PRESBYTERIAN
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Hearn, Rev. Walter, died peacefully in his sleep early on Sunday, April 24, 2016 with his family by his side after an 18-month battle with cancer. Beloved husband of Eva, the love of his life; dear and loving father to Matthew, Lindsay and Christopher.

Although Walt's passing has left us all heartbroken, we happily remember the wonderful years we were blessed to have shared with him. A service in celebration of Walt's life was held on Saturday, April 30 at Willowdale Presbyterian Church (38 Ellerslie Ave., North York, Ont.) where he ministered for almost 19 years. +

Obituaries

FOR THE JOURNEY

When the Hunter Becomes the Hunted

Taking risks in life and faith. *by* DAVID WEBBER

ABOUT THIS TIME of year, for a week every autumn, my eldest son Davin together with his wife Ife, our little granddaughter Kira and the grandpups Alby and Vega come up from the South Thompson area of B.C. to visit us in the Cariboo. For Linda and me it's a wonderful time of year filled with wonderful people (not to mention dogs) and usually ends with a whole family project of cutting and wrapping deer meat. And so, last autumn found Davin and me leaving home before daylight to travel up to the headwaters of Knife Creek on day three of our annual father-son deer hunt.

Davin dropped me off about three kilometres from the place where he was going to hunt. The plan was for me to slowly make my way on foot through the thick bush towards where he was going to be hunting. We planned to meet up for lunch. I had been moving very slowly in my prearranged direction when I came across an old cut line, quite wide and covered with sumptuous grass and forbs. I decided to sit at its edge and use the binoculars to watch for any mule deer that might come out to feed. Perhaps a big buck would come out and we could fill the winter larder for both families.

I didn't have to wait long. Four female deer arrived about 200 metres upwind from me and began to feed on the lush grass. Intrigued, I was glued to my binoculars watching these beautiful animals when one of the does caught site of me. She couldn't catch my scent as the wind was blowing from her to me, but gradually she began to lead the other three deer right towards me to investigate what this strange



thing was pretending to be a stump on the edge of the cut line. Eventually she and her crew came up to within a couple of metres of me, poking their heads out to smell and staring at my sitting form trying to figure me out. And then they crossed the favourable wind threshold and I was busted. Suddenly catching my scent, the four deer literally sprang into the air in unison, swapped ends while they were in mid air and came down to jump away like four kangaroos.

I stood up and chuckled to myself. No wonder my favourite 18th-century ex-

plorer David Thompson called mule deer "jumping deer." All of a sudden, a giant clatter and racket together with a large tree being pushed over shocked me. The hellish sound came from four metres away in the bush, downwind from where I had been sitting all the time. It was exactly on my back trail; like whatever made it had been following me right up until I decided to pause and watch the deer, when it had obviously paused to watch me.

"Huh, must have been a moose," I muttered to myself. I packed up my stuff and nonchalantly headed out again across the cutline to continue through the bush.

That's when I ran headlong into the biggest bear biffy I had ever seen. There must have been a dozen large mounds of fresh berry-bulging bear bowel movements all in a circle like some bear convention had been taking place on the edge of the cutline for a week. But I knew that wasn't it. I had been sitting near the site of a black bear's den and I had almost been selected as the bedtime snack before it turned in ➤

FOR THE JOURNEY, continued

for the winter. I left the area considerably faster than I had arrived and with a whole lot more glancing over my shoulder. The hunter had become the hunted.

But this is not unusual for me in my bushwhacking. I am often walking near the edge of apparent danger, be it from predators, getting lost, getting stranded and a host of other risks. I just don't think about it much. It just goes with bush territory and if am going to be in the bush I have to accept the risks.

A couple of hours later I came to where Davin had been hunting and he had an amazing four-point mule deer buck already harvested and cleaned. We loaded it into the pickup and headed home. Now the work would begin with the skinning, boning, cutting and wrapping.

As I drove I thought. I knew I had taken a risk hunting where I had and by hunting alone. And I knew the risk I had taken had almost paid off—for the bear that is. The question on my mind was how does a person of faith relate to taking risks? What does the Bible say about it? I stored up these questions in my mind to sort through later.

It turns out the Bible has a lot to say about risk taking in living the life of faith. Generally, Jesus urges prudence with regards to risk taking, but he also says much to encourage it. He encourages taking the risk to invest ourselves fully in the work of the Kingdom. He tells the parable of the talents, saying those who risk investing everything for the Kingdom of God are worth more to God than those who play it safe and risk nothing. He ends with saying that to those who risk much, more will be given—to risk I expect—and he closes with a stern warning for those who will not take risks for the Kingdom at all (Matthew 25:14-30).

The writer of Ecclesiastes has much to say about everything, especially risk taking. Foolish risk taking for the faithful is generally discouraged while prudent risk taking is required. Chapter 11 is my favourite example. Here in the first six verses the example of a merchant and a farmer are given. Both must live taking risks for neither knows how the things they can't control will affect their endeavours. "Cast your bread upon the waters" illustrates that the merchant must take the risk of shipwreck and pirates but still must send out his grain aboard his ships to trade or he will never survive. But he must be wise and send out seven or eight ships instead of a single one, says the teacher. In other words, don't put all your eggs in one basket. Likewise, the farmer, who must take the risk of planting does so not knowing the weather. The farmer must take the risk and plant but like the merchant he plants more than one crop not knowing if one or the other or both will succeed. Both must take risks to succeed and both have to be faithful in terms of limiting the risk. The point in all this, I think, is that in the Kingdom, faith is a life of taking risks by trusting God, and faithfulness is a life of being prudent or careful and wise in serving God.

Hmmm—faith and faithfulness; risk taking and prudence—dare I call it the ying and the yang of the Christian life? Obviously balance is the key, which raises the question: how balanced am I? If I am bone honest, I am usually way over-invested in the yang side of the equation—way overcautious I think, except in my bushwhacking. Would that I could live my faith life for God a little more like I bushwhack and hunt for game. ☩

Rev. David Webber, now retired, lives in Lac La Hache, B.C.





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FOR THE RECORD

A Beautiful Life

The *Presbyterian Record* to cease publication after December. *by* **ANDREW CORNELL**

Like walking into a congregation, opening the *Record* produced familiar faces, always with something fresh to say, perhaps a new voice or two, something to think about, laugh about, get angry about.

I EXITED THE NEWS BUSINESS one year before my job was eliminated, so I didn't have to endure the ignominy of termination. Every December, approaching fiscal year end, we awaited the annual bloodletting.

And now I find myself on the other side, one of those who operate in a distant location, in a place far removed. Today, we pulled the plug on a beautiful life. With a few "ayes" the directors approved recommendations to cease publication of the *Presbyterian Record* after the December issue.

I regularly drive past buildings that were once churches and are now homes and reception centres. Once vibrant congregations gradually declined to where they could no longer pay the bills. In most cases, they had enough cash to pay severances and leave a small legacy. In a sense, that's the *Presbyterian Record*. After years of declining subscription and advertising revenue, despite valiant efforts to find new methods of sustainability, the corporation reached the point where windup was the only responsible move.

But the similarity ends there. The congregation of a dying church has a leaky roof, a mouldy basement, cobwebs and falling plaster. It looks old and it smells old. Not the *Record*. As if to spite the decline, its staff in recent years have continued to perform like athletes and artists in their prime. I can say this as a fellow journalist—because it's always in the blood—that they produce awe-inspiring work. They will continue to do so until the final edition, despite working under notice of termination.

We pulled the plug on a beautiful thing.


The September meeting of the board of directors, where the decision was made, was short and to the point. The discussions had already taken place. The windup committee had done its job. At one point, it grew deadly silent.

"We don't know what to say," came the quiet voice from one director.

At the final service of a local congregation a few years ago, I told the congregation that for every church we close, let us vow to plant a new one. Easily said. But where will these athletes and musicians perform their journalistic wonder?

Like walking into a congregation, opening the *Record* produced familiar faces, always with something fresh to say, perhaps a new voice or two, something to think about, laugh about, get angry about. I always came away feeling a little more hopeful, much like a good, healthy Christ-centred community.

Soon, that will be gone. And in its place? Scattered voices.

Yet we are reformed and always reforming. Unlike the engineer or architect, we don't see the vision. We are the workers, receiving daily instruction. And we operate with this in mind: "This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out." Matthew 16:18 (*The Message*) 

Rev. Andrew Cornell is pastor at St. Andrew's, Dresden, Ont., and a director of Presbyterian Record Inc.

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

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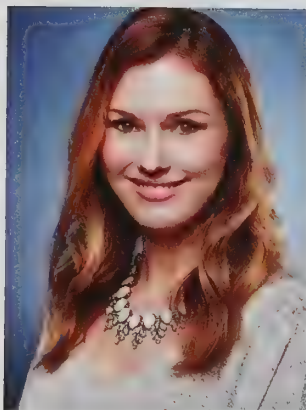
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Contributors



CAROLINE BISHOP is the *Record's* art director and has been with the magazine since 2006, implementing a major redesign and winning many awards at both the Canadian Church Press and the Associated Church Press. She is passionate about editorial design, and loves the variety of work she creates across many genres for Canada's top magazines. She is forever thankful for 10 incredible years

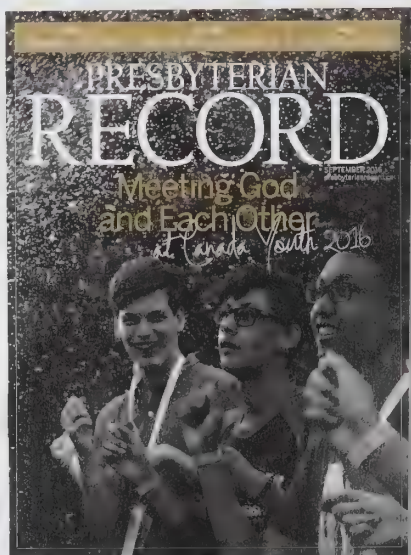
with the *Record*. It has been her rock during the chaos of the past decade, during which she became a wife and mom of three.

JENNIFER NEUTEL still attends the same Presbyterian church in Cobourg, Ont., where she grew up. She is drawn to telling generative stories that can spark positive change in communities, much like her story this month about refugee sponsorship. When she's not immersed in playing with Lego, sand and tractors with her two young boys, she works as a freelance journalist and is *Christian Courier's* development manager.



BONNIE BELDAN-THOMSON is a musician, educator and writer who lives, works and gardens with her grandchildren near Toronto. Proximity to one of the most diverse cities in the world has augmented Bonnie's appreciation of individual differences. She is a member of Malvern, Scarborough.

Letters



Write to us: LETTERS@PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA

Support for Healing

Re Presbyterian Church Did Not Seek Refund Under Terms of Settlement Agreement, July/August

While the United Church acknowledges a shortfall in their settlement, they go on to say "it is our understanding that if the \$450,000 had been contributed by the United Church,

it would only reduce the government contribution by the same amount. The survivors would not have received any additional compensation."

In defence of their support for reconciliation, the UCC website goes on to say, in part, that, "over the past 12 years, the United Church has contributed \$1 million annually toward

healing and reconciliation initiatives."
JOHN MEEK, ORANGEVILLE, ONT.

Thanks for the Record

Re What Do You Want?, April

When I look at the people sitting in my little, rural church (which is full every Sunday), I'm not sure how many of them can read and understand the majority of the articles in the magazine. I don't mean this to sound patronizing, but I think that the pages you used to print for children were often some of the most discussed parts of the magazine. My church likes pictures and games—things that don't intimidate them but still allow them to think.

And, the letters to the editor are often vicious, closed-minded and condescending. They discourage me before I even get started into the magazine. I have tried simply skipping over them, but even that makes me feel badly because there are also letters from thoughtful, generous people from whom I can learn.

I admire the way you and your staff are struggling to keep the *Record* afloat. It's a tough go for magazines these days when people want to be told (in

Pastor Shep



www.pastorsherp.ca

©Susan Mattinson

summary form) what to believe. I really appreciate how hard you work to be fair and balanced and to challenge the minds of your readers. I pray for your continued success.

JANET FRANKLIN, VIA EMAIL

Take Risks

Re September issue

When the *Record* arrives, I often turn to For the Journey by David Webber, and am never disappointed. This time I found I was really asking myself, "do I take enough risks?" Then I really appreciated Todd Statham's excellent article about refugees and faith in Germany.

However, the rest of the September *Record* seems more focused on the personal and individual aspects of faith and of relationships with God. I missed the updates and content on social justice issues that I have come to expect (i.e. Kairos, Truth and Reconciliation, climate change, homelessness, etc.)

I encourage the *Record* to continue taking risks, and to keep a balance between the personal and political, even if this sparks controversy.

ROSE JANSON, HAMILTON, ONT.

Clarification

Re Worshipping Together, News, September

The events surrounding the fire in Fort McMurray in May were chaotic. Rev. Lisa Aide, outgoing minister at Faith, along with all other residents of the town, evacuated quickly. In the immediate aftermath of the fire she spent time in medical care for her asthma.

While she was expected to start at her new church in Ontario, she did request a delay to return to Fort McMurray. The situation in Alberta was not conducive to her prompt return to provide pastoral care to her

congregation of eight years.

If the news article suggests anything otherwise, that would be a misreading.

In our phone conversation, Rev. Aide expressed her confidence in the continuing ministry provided by Faith in Fort McMurray. Perhaps it was Albertan humility that kept the members from bragging on their local ministries, but she told me Faith members are involved in many aspects of community life to which they take the church always. Many new members come from that missional work.

ANDREW FAIZ, SENIOR EDITOR

The Christmas Art Contest deadline is November 4th.

Send in your entries to be featured in our final issue!



• Email a high resolution scan or photograph of your Christmas themed artwork to cwardle@presbyterian.ca

• Or send your artwork on an 8.5"x11" page to: Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto ON M3C 1J7

• Please be sure to include your name, the church you attend, and your age on the back of each entry.



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POP CHRISTIANITY

Brag On Yourself

Please. *by* ANDREW FAIZ

While I was in Alberta in early August, I dropped in at Memorial, Rocky Mountain House, where I was a summer student in 1984. That was a long time ago; and it was wonderful to meet people I hadn't seen in decades. Of course, I'm famous now, thanks to the mug staring out at you from this page, so a dozen people from the congregation came to chat over lunch. That was fun, in theory; they asked me some tough questions.

One I'd like to deal with here was asked by the new minister at Memorial, Rev. Devadosan Sugirtharaj. He is originally from India and joined our denomination earlier this year and he already had me on the mat begging for air. He wanted to know why there wasn't more material in the *Record* from rural places. To which I would add the more common critique, from non-Ontario places.

Let me start with the cliché answer, which is true if overused: Any national institution in Canada has the same challenge. This is a big country with a small population, with little density. For Presbyterians, the density is in southern Ontario and secondarily on the east coast. Heading west, PCC churches are few and far between. That's a challenge.

But for our denomination the challenge is even deeper. The self-defined Presbyterian identity, and association with the denomination, is greatest on the east coast and then in southern

You all don't always think of yourselves as unique and interesting enough to brag on yourself. But I humbly submit that you're wrong. Have confidence in your story. Have confidence in God. Tell your story.

Ontario. In both parts of the country there are overt Scottish place names. The *Record* is more likely to get a submission from one of these Presbyterian hubs for, let's say, a choir that got new robes, than we are from a western (or Korean, or Ghanaian, etc.) congregation for any reason, whether new robes or community mission.

In a post-denominational, post-

Christendom, post-this, post-that world in which we now live, denominational identity is not very important to some congregations.


Also, there's a sense of isolation. The further a spot is from the centre, the greater the isolation the congregants feel. Someone from Western Canada is more likely to have travelled straight south to the States than to Ontario. They don't feel as connected to where I live.

At the *Record* we have tried in many ways over the years to build connections. We are a very small team, but every few years we call all the clerks of presbyteries to ask about what's happening in their churches. It's a frustrating process. We have also asked through the magazine for people to self-report: Brag on your church, your congregation.

You all don't always think of yourselves as unique and interesting enough to brag on yourself. But I humbly submit that you're wrong.

The *Record* will end its 140-year run this December, but your story will not. The story that God is writing through the Presbyterian Church in Canada continues.

Have confidence in that story. Have confidence in God. Tell your story.

And maybe one day the *Record* will return. And do a better job of sharing stories from every corner. 

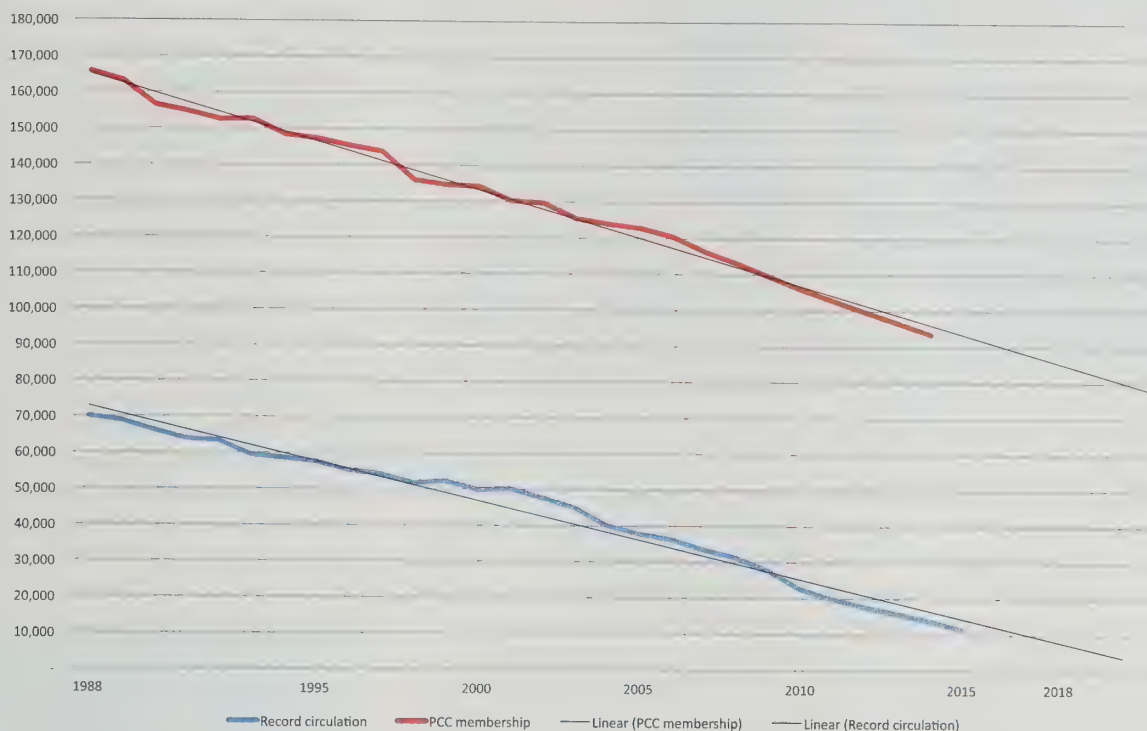
Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.



BULLETIN

Community and World News

Church Membership and Magazine Circulation



RECORD UPDATE

Goodbye to the Record

Magazine will close its doors after 140 years of service. *by* RECORD STAFF

Facing declining circulation and revenue, the board of directors of Presbyterian Record Inc., publisher of the *Presbyterian Record*, has decided to cease publication of the magazine with the December 2016 issue.

In a statement board chair Botond Fejes wrote: "Arriving at this conclusion has been a difficult process for the board. Its members have struggled with this responsibility for a considerable time. The continued publication of the *Record*, in its present configuration, was simply not sustainable ... therefore, we are sadly constrained to allow this ebb in the fortunes of the *Presbyterian Record* to run its course."

The magazine's publisher and editor, David Harris, said the magazine simply couldn't transition quickly enough from a >

RECORD UPDATE, continued

subscription-based model to a philanthropically financed model.

“Our donors have been fantastic,” said Harris. “Over the past 12 years, they have given us almost \$1.5 million. Without that support, the magazine would have folded years ago.”

Over the past 25 years, readership has been declining at an average rate of 2,000 subscribers a year, while the denomination itself—the magazine’s sole market—has been declining at a rate of about 2,800 members a year.

The Record posted a loss of \$141,425 at the end of 2015 on a \$900,000 budget, with another nearly quarter million-dollar loss projected for 2016. Harris said the magazine would have needed to raise an additional \$75,000 this year and about \$250,000 next year in order to continue. The magazine approached General Assembly in June for support in asking the broader church to try to come up with \$50,000. But with committees just beginning to hold fall meetings, the only achievement was free rent at 50 Wynford Dr., the church’s national offices in Toronto, saving about \$20,000 from the budget.

Harris also said that publishing an online-only version of the magazine was not an option. “Salaries, not printing and postage, are the biggest costs at a small magazine like the *Record*,” he said. “You need excellent staff whether a publication is online or print. And the *Record* could not expect to generate significant online revenue.”

The Record has been published monthly since January 1876. Over its 140 years it has had eight editors. Harris has led the magazine since 2002.

In 1975, circulation stood at 88,000. By the turn of the century, that number had fallen to 50,000 and has continued the slide to about 10,000 today.

“Besides the fall in denominational numbers, the financial crisis of

2007-2008 was definitely a major factor,” said Harris. “Many—perhaps most—Presbyterians are on a fixed income. They saw their net worth fall, their pension income decline, and congregations needed their money just to keep up the buildings and ministers’ salaries.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada itself has lost about a third of its members so far this century.

“The magazine became an expendable luxury under the circumstances.”

The 2000s have been hard on both church membership and print media. Dozens of denominational and other faith-based magazines have closed—the *Western Catholic Reporter*, with a weekly circulation of 32,000, folded its print edition at the end of September.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada itself has lost about a third of its members so far this century. According to the denomination’s statistics, at the beginning of 2000 there were 134,683 communicant members, and 28,120 children in Sunday schools. Congregations raised \$94.8 million, of which \$8.6 million went to Presbyterians Sharing, the national operating fund for the denomination.

By 2015, the numbers had fallen to 91,036 members and a little over 17,000 in Sunday school. Congregations raised \$127 million, of which \$7 million was sent to Presbyterians Sharing.

In 2015 alone, the Presbyterian Church in Canada lost 16 congregations, 206 elders, and 2,379 households.


And staff cuts at the national office have been ongoing for the last decade.

While the magazine is not directly funded by the PCC, it does receive below-market rent at national offices and the bulk of the advertising featured is from within the denomination.

Presbyterian Record Inc. was formed in 2000 to publish the magazine, and the original letters patent also allow the corporation to meet the denomination’s various publishing needs.

While the magazine will cease publication in 2017, the board has decided not to fold Presbyterian Record Inc. It is clear that magazines like the *Record* can no longer be sustained on the subscription model that worked well for nearly a century, but the directors want to keep the corporation’s options open.

“The board has been fully supportive of the dedicated and talented staff that has brought the Presbyterian Church in Canada this quality publication for so many years,” said board chair Botond Fejes. “This decision underlines the board’s moral and legal commitment to the management and employees of the *Record* to ensure that this painful but necessary process be in keeping with the Christian principles of the PCC.”

Along with Harris, the editorial staff includes managing editor Amy MacLachlan (since 2003), senior editor Andrew Faiz (2004), and senior writer Connie Wardle (2008). Deborah Leader has been the circulation manager since 2005. Lisa Van Arem was appointed director of development last year. Caroline Bishop has been the art director since 2006; Salina Vanderhorn has been the designer since 2011; and Wil McGilvery has managed the website since 2010. 

Please post comments to this article on the Record’s website or Facebook page.

Nominate a Woman of Faith

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW being accepted for the Presbyterian Women of Faith Awards.

The award recognizes the work of women within the church, celebrating faithful service, a specific accomplishment or a lifetime of achievement. It was created by the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Order of Diaconal Ministries and the Women's Missionary Society and is open to all women who are a part of the PCC, including lay people, ministers and missionaries.

It is hoped that the award (and the nomination process itself) will encourage the sharing of stories of women in ministry. Recipients will be recognized at a banquet at the National Presbyterian Women's Gathering on May 21, 2017.

A nomination form must be completed by a court or organization of the PCC.

The deadline for submissions is Nov. 30. 🍁 —PCC



Rev. Dr. Jonathan Dent (seen here with his wife, Lynne) was installed to his new position as national director of the Canadian Bible Society at a ceremony in September at Trinity, Toronto. Dent was appointed in April. He was ordained in the PCC in 1988 and has served congregations in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland. The CBS is in its 110th year, with a mandate to "promote and encourage, without doctrinal note or comment, the translation, publication, distribution, and use of the Bible."

PRESBYTERIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL IN SPOTLIGHT

A PRESBYTERIAN RESIDENTIAL school is about to take centre stage when Tragically Hip frontman Gord Downie holds two concerts to raise money and awareness about a boy who died escaping from the school 50 years ago.

Chanie Wenjack was just 12 years old

when he ran away from Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School, near Kenora, Ont., in 1966 and died from exposure. He was trying to get back home to see his father and travelled 60 km before succumbing to hunger and harsh weather.

"The tragedy of Chanie Wenjack is a part of the sad legacy of residential schools," says Stephen Kendall, the PCC's principal clerk, in a news release. "His story has an important place in our history as a denomination. As we continue to ask forgiveness from Aboriginal peoples, we pray and hope we can also find opportunities to find healing and wholeness together."

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Wenjack's death and several big names

in Canada are highlighting the tragedy. Downie, along with Jeff Lemire, has published *Secret Path*, a graphic novel detailing the story and will release an accompanying album Oct. 18. He will also play two concerts in Ottawa and Toronto to promote the project. Proceeds will go to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba. An animated film will also be broadcast on CBC on Oct. 23, and a book by author Joseph Boyden, simply titled *Wenjack*, will be released on Oct. 18.

"Chanie haunts me," said Downie in a statement. "His story is Canada's story. This is about Canada. We are not the country we thought we were." 🍁 —AM with files from the PCC

MINISTRY

Summer at St. Mark's

Serving God despite the holiday. *by* HARRIS ATHANASIADIS

Summertime is usually a slower time in congregational life. But this summer was very busy for St. Mark's, Don Mills, Toronto. The congregation initiated and now runs ecumenically a full summer day camp called Footprints (footprintssummerdaycamp.org). The camp welcomes 50 children (aged six to 13) and Leaders in Training (L.I.T.s, aged 14 to 16) and is run by a staff of six young adults and many volunteers. Many of the children, youth and staff come from our churches and have made Footprints a focus of their summer plans. It is also a great opportunity for fun, learning, spirituality and employment for our young people; a tangible way the church can support and engage them meaningfully.

The camp also receives subsidized funding from our churches, the PCC Cookes Fund as well as the federal government. This allows us to welcome any child no matter what their families can pay. This year we were privileged to open up spaces for refugee children, one of whom is part of a family St. Mark's has sponsored. Some of the L.I.T.s also brought friends who belong to other faith traditions (like Islam) whose parents were supportive because Footprints represents a sister faith. Christ is proclaimed in many unique ways through this camp and we welcome one and all—people of faith or no faith.

In addition, on July 26, St. Mark's welcomed a family the congregation has sponsored that has been accepted by the Canadian government on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. While the children were able to attend a great




Footprints summer camp staff at St. Mark's, Don Mills, Toronto.

camp experience and begin to learn some English with other children from our churches, the congregation was busy organizing furniture, the search for an apartment and all the health, educational and public registrations necessary. The hope was to have the family reunited and moving in to their apartment by Sept. 1. A lot of planning by a lot of volunteers was necessary to pull this off. We had a wonderful celebration service on Sept. 25, with representatives from Presbyterian World Service & Development and our local Member of Parliament, Yasmin Ratansi.

Finally, the Noor Cultural Centre and Mosque invited me and the St. Mark's congregation to their afternoon prayer service in August. I, along with

Azeezah Kanji (*Toronto Star* columnist on Muslim issues) offered short sermons dialogically on John the Baptist in our two traditions. A wonderful time of fellowship was enjoyed following the service. Even though we have different understandings of the primacy of Christ, we also share so much more than we ever imagined.

Summertime is a great time to relax and enjoy life and God's wondrous creation. But it is also a wonderful time to serve God's creative love and bear witness to the power of Christ through the Holy Spirit to change lives and build bridges beyond the many walls around us. 

Rev. Dr. Harris Athanasiadis is minister at St. Mark's, Don Mills, Toronto.

Faith.

Deepening your relationship with God

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY

Thankful for Get-Tos

Life aware of God's living love.

by KATIE MUNNIK

ONE SUNDAY MORNING a few weeks ago, I was leaving church with a friend, chatting while our small boys dawdled, their fists full of gathered sticks and their minds full of adventures. It had been one of those quiet Sundays when the congregation was small and our own children loud. The two little ones journeyed back and forth between our pews and we parents took turns reading stories, asking questions, and sharing out snacks. Wonderfully, everyone was understanding and the merciful minister joyfully sympathetic and unfazed. Glancing back at the building, my friend said that she felt it was such a privilege to worship there.

What a lovely thought. To look at our worshipping community not as the product of a choice we've made, but as a gift we've received. What my kids might call a "get-to."

Their days are full of "have-tos." They have to do their homework. They have to tidy their rooms, to wash >



ISTOCK

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY, continued

their hands, to remember their things for school, and to help with the dishes. Then on top of everything else, they have to go to sleep when their demanding parents say so. But they have plenty of “get-tos” as well. They get to pick and borrow vast mountains of library books, to play at the park on the way home from school and to choose and make dessert with a little help from a supervising parent.

“Get-tos” bring joy. These are moments we can fall into and relish. Even if they are productive, they are not goal-focused but joy-filled. To recognize our get-tos is to celebrate and to be thankful.

This is a month for recognizing our get-tos. Our harvest celebrations are rooted in the turn of the seasons, but they also offer us an opportunity to reflect on growth and bounty in our own particular situations. Thanksgiving is a chance to sit, see and be thankful.

Which might sound peaceful or restful, but of course it isn’t. Thankfulness creeps. It stretches. It wants to fill our hands and it grows

to contain our whole lives. Then as whole-hearted thanks-givers, we live aware of God’s living love. Then even our have-tos become get-tos.

I get to wake up in the morning with things to do. I get to feed my kids. I get to work. I get to rest. I get to eat. I get to exercise. All of these simple activities become stories of God’s love at work in the world.

Throughout this month, the lectionary readings highlight Luke’s

The scriptures are there to remind us just how big those stories get. Biblical history covers a wide span of time, throughout which people in every generation learned to listen and to trust, to serve God and to be stretched by gratitude.

stories of Jesus’ ministry. We will be reading his parables—and thinking perhaps about those who heard them the first time around—as well as telling stories about the meals he shared and people who sat to eat with him. These stories pile up with healings and forgiveness, and the promise of a kingdom that grows among us and ripens within us so that we, too, might bear fruit.

It is a privilege to get to hear these stories. They are all stories of God’s own faithfulness—on large and small scales—and they call us to pay attention. When we begin to see God in our own lives and when that thankfulness begins to creep in, we get hungry for bigger stories. The scriptures are there to remind us just how big those stories get. Biblical history covers a wide span of time, throughout which people in every generation learned to listen and to trust, to serve God and to be stretched by gratitude. We may not get to be the headline in this vast story—we don’t have to be. Instead, we get to be the people of God in our own time and place and for that, we can be profoundly thankful. ☦

Katie Munnik lives in Cardiff, Wales, with three kids and a professor husband. She blogs at The Messy Table on presbyterianrecord.ca.

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Jesus Healing the Leper, 1864 (oil on canvas) by Jean-Marie Melchior Doze.

PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

Thanksgiving in Thin Places

Jesus calls us forward. *by* LAURENCE DEWOLFE

Thanksgiving / Pentecost 21
October 9, 2016
Luke 17:11-17

This gospel story is the first choice of many preachers for Thanksgiving Sunday in any year. It's still a challenging

text. We have to try to preach about gratitude without turning the sermon into a guilt trip. We also have to re-tell the story in a way that doesn't make it about nine bad Jews versus one good Gentile. The 10th man is a Samaritan, of course. We must resist the temptation to retread our exegesis from recent sermons on the most popular parable, from Luke 10. >

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The Presbyterian Church in
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Solus Christus (Christ Alone)

KEYNOTERS:

Wendy Beauchemin Peterson

Editor, North American Indigenous
Institute for Theological

Peter Bush

Westwood Church, Winnipeg

PANELISTS INCLUDE:

Irma Fast Dueck

Don Draayer

Germaine Lovelace

October 29, 2016

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (CDT)

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PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY, continued

Nine of the men don't come back to thank Jesus. That doesn't make them villains. It seems they're all Judeans. They do what Jesus tells them to do! They're healed, but not pardoned. The rightful authorities must rule on their healing and lift the sentence of banishment.

I like to imagine the 10th man falls in behind his former partners in misery. Singing hymns. Same God, if different churches. They've been travelling together for a while. Then he remembers his hometown is in the opposite direction.

The 10th man turns around, toward his new life. Jesus is still there. Jesus still stands in no-one's-land. Jesus spends a lot of time walking borders, doing clean-up in DMZs, meeting outsiders in no-one's-land.

Yes, Jesus is frustrated. He gave them all so much! Nine of them, his own people, should have known enough to pay him a little respect. Just one, this foreigner, seems to understand what has happened.

Or does he? Maybe he's just overwhelmed. Jesus seems to have that effect on people.

Imagine the two of them: Jesus and the man from Samaria. They're in liminal space, a place of vulnerability to one another and to God. It's true the nine couldn't wait to get out of there. This one wouldn't have walked back into it if he could have avoided it. But here they are.

No-one's-land. The In Between. What St. Columba called a "thin place." Is it earth? Is it heaven? Could it be both? Like Columba, the 10th man

discovered the place of exile is also the place of healing and rebirth. And God is close.

Gratitude, deep gratitude, takes us to a thin place. We find ourselves suspended between abundance and emptiness. We know we are richly blessed. We also know we can never earn or own the wealth we enjoy. It's real. But it comes from somewhere beyond ourselves.

The Thanksgiving feast on the table can't take us there. The people who gather around the table to share the feast can. The decorations and special music in the Thanksgiving service can't take us there. The people who enjoy them with us, and the memories the songs and symbols evoke take us to the thin place called gratitude. We have everything because we are loved. We have nothing of any value, except love. Everything we are, we are because we are loved.

In a thin place we can feel both safe and afraid. We're aware of an abiding, enveloping Presence. Even though we know it's constant, we fear we'll lose it somehow. We're frozen, maybe on our knees, afraid the next thing we do will mess it up. But we can't linger in a thin place.

What will the 10th man do when he goes home? Jesus has to move on, too. He's on a mission. The 10th man has a whole new life ahead of him. On the ground, he lays the life he's been given at Jesus' feet. That's an image of discipleship.

When we experience gratitude, deep gratitude, we're changed. When we step out of that thin place, the direction we choose determines whether or not the change lasts. Jesus' call to us is always forward. Where will gratitude send us this Thanksgiving? ☩

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe is
minister at Glenview, Toronto.*



RENEWAL

Five Years of Fortune

To God be the glory. *by* **FRED STEWART**

IT IS TIME FOR ME TO BID this column, the Renewal Fellowship and my Encouragement Road Trips a wistful goodbye. At 67, I can no longer pretend to function at the energy level or capacity I once did. So, after five years of serving the denomination under the Renewal banner, I sadly must hand it on to the next fortunate individual to take on these responsibilities.

I say “fortunate” because it has been a rich and rewarding time. I have met so many of you and shared your pulpits, your homes and even your lives. The Presbyterian family across Canada has a warmth and hospitality that I believe is second to none.

I say “fortunate” because I had the privilege of listening to so many of you. I got to share your hopes and fears, your faith

and anxieties and your joys and pain. It was especially poignant when I sometimes realized that I was hearing a story that you had never previously shared.

I say “fortunate” because I met so many new friends on the journey. Many I connected with were part of the Fellowship or at least supported the evangelical/conservative/traditional beliefs we hold. But it may surprise you that a significant number of friends made during this time either subtly or profoundly disagree with me. But we talked and we shared our hearts and we became friends.

I say “fortunate” because I got to witness and experience the generosity of God’s people in new and palpable ways. There was generosity of hospitality. I visited more than ➤

RENEWAL, continued

100 churches and stayed in dozens of billets these past five years. From the Atlantic to the Pacific I was welcomed graciously and enthusiastically. There was generosity of prayer. Almost everywhere I visited, inevitably someone would in a quiet moment tell me of their constant or daily prayers for me and the ministry I lead. There was generosity of financial support. As most of you know, the Renewal Fellowship is solely supported by its friends and members and does not receive funds from the PCC. For these sacrifices I am truly grateful. But there was also a generosity of advice. There were many of our educators, senior ministers, committee convenors and Moderators of General Assembly who took the time and effort to speak into this ministry and its direction. Often, these men and women would also serve as sounding boards as our board of directors and I sought to discern God's direction for our future.

At the end, I seek no credit for any good that was done. To God be all glory.

For any mistakes that were made I take full responsibility.

My prayer is that the last five years have made a difference as we attempted to serve and to love as our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ commanded and demonstrated.

There is still much to do. I want to encourage the denomination, presbyteries, sessions and members to love and encourage your ministers, educators and leaders as never before. Love them so that they can love and serve you with joy and enthusiasm.

"The harvest is great but the labourers are few."

Amen. ☩

Rev. Fred Stewart is executive director of the Renewal Fellowship.



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SHARING WITNESS

Get To Know Me

Start with a simple hello. *by* VIVIAN KETCHUM

Reconciliation.

A long word with many meanings. A word that leads to many interpretations for many of us. As a residential school survivor that has been scarred by my residential school experience, my interpretation of that word is simple.

Get to know me. As I am today. As I was yesterday and the person I will be tomorrow.

Your opinion of me will change once you have met me. It is a short walk for me to get to know you as a simple acquaintance to a friend. Eventually I may even get to refer >

SHARING WITNESS, continued

to you as my brother or sister in my small circle.

Get to know me—my past and the hidden wounds that I carry. Find out why there is a shadow of sadness beneath the smile I wear. My sense of humour is a large part of me and I use it in many different ways. Sit down with me one day and we will laugh together. We may even laugh at each other, if we are so comfortable with one another.

Reconcile your personal opinions of what I should be in your eyes. It will change once you get to know me. See past my brown skin and other visible signs of my Indigenous culture. That is a small part of who I am. I have dreams and goals like many other people. Some I have proudly achieved and I will be glad to share my story with you. I have also suffered personal losses in my life. A few that have changed me. Talk with me and pray with me as I share that sad part of my life. As I share my stories, you may find a common thread in the words I share.

Let us not talk about how different we are from each other. That will only build up walls that need tearing down. Walls that were created from mistrust and false assumptions of each other's culture and faith. Reconciliation is about getting to know the other person. A simple hello tears down a piece of that wall. A handshake is a true gesture of hospitality and a step forward in reconciliation.

Get to know my culture and why the sound of the drum is so important to me. Once you understand the language of our drum and our songs—songs that our ancestors

I have dreams and goals like many other people. Some I have proudly achieved and I will be glad to share my story with you. I have also suffered personal losses in my life. A few that have changed me. Talk with me and pray with me as I share that sad part of my life. As I share my stories, you may find a common thread in the words I share.

still sing today at various ceremonies—you will hear the true history and will feel the beat of the drum. Why we call it our mother's heartbeat. Why it calls to us.

Let me get to know you—beyond your first name and title. Reconciliation is more than exchanging first and last names. I want to know why your brow is so furrowed and are those laugh lines around your mouth? What causes that sparkle in your eye when you talk of a loved one? I want to know all that and more.


Is it that difficult to see past my brown skin and dark eyes? You may see me sitting on a park bench. Alone. Get past your first assumption of me that history is telling you. How the general public perceives an Indigenous person and woman. No, I am not a drunken Indian or a squaw. Nor am I waiting to ask you for money. I am there to rest or to enjoy a moment of solitude. I may even be waiting to

make a new friend. Again, a simple hello is welcomed.

Reconciliation needs two people from two different worlds. Mutual trust and willingness to accept one's differences. Embrace each other's different culture and faith. Find common ground to walk together. To want to change the worlds they are in. Make it better for their neighbour and friends.

Get to know the person who I am, not the object that society assumes I am. Not what the government says I am. Not what the media writes about me as an Indigenous woman.

I am a mother, grandmother, someone's niece and daughter. Common themes we all have. Let us build from there.

Get to know me. 

Vivian Ketchum is Anishinabe of Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation, outside of Kenora, Ont. She lives in Winnipeg.

Life

Thoughts and inspiration for your daily life



FAMILY

Losing Loved Ones

How to support those left behind.

by PATRICIA SCHNEIDER

When you have a toothache it is very difficult to say to yourself, "Well, at least I have teeth." You are just in too much pain. Similarly when you lose a loved one, someone saying to you, "Well you had him as a husband for over 50 years" does not remove the pain or heartache and seems less than compassionate. >

FAMILY, continued

Platitudes are personally insulting, and unless you've been there you can't say, "I understand" or "time will heal" or "he's in a better place." You don't understand and time will not heal—at least not for many of us. You may not grieve as you once did, but you will mourn your lost love the rest of your life, and you will still be saying to yourself, "His best place was beside me."

Maybe the better thing to say to the widow, with honesty, is that you are sorry and that you will always remember your loved one with affection or "you will be in my daily prayers."

For some I can reach out
and give a hug, share a tear
or just listen to the heartbreak ...
for others there is a wall that
is impossible to pass through.
A very polite wall but one you
see right away; it has no door
for intruders to walk through.



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I wish I had known these things years ago. You are taught so many things as life goes on—schooling, business, marriage, but seldom does the etiquette regarding death ever surface.

And I guess there is no right way to deal with it. As a widow my heart has ached for anyone in a similar situation. For some I can reach out and give a hug, share a tear or just listen to the heartbreak ... for others there is a wall that is impossible to pass through. A very polite wall but one you see right away; it has no door for intruders to walk through.

Even your Christian friends react differently to the death of a spouse. You're wise if you can read them early and save yourself from being hurt. Compassion unacceptable is not an easy thing to swallow. And some just need time—sometimes years to reach a final acceptance of the pain that resulted from the loss. Some are so busy filling in the empty spaces with things to do,

they almost push you out of the picture. However, my suggestion for you is to just be there, for a day may come when they will need a hug so desperately. I spoke to one widow who didn't come to grips with the finality of her loss until three years had passed.

If you are sitting on the side of those doing the counselling, do so with gentle sincerity, with genuine concern and without platitudes. Please.

And if you find yourself not knowing how to react to the loss of your loved one, don't be worried—there are no rules regarding these things. Live it one day at a time, knowing with your whole heart that God knows exactly what pain you are in and God is carrying you and will only set you down when you have the strength again to stand on your own two feet. ☩

*Patricia Schneider lives in Alberta.
She blogs at presbyterianrecord.ca.*



REFLECTION

Don't Worry, Dad

I'll see you again. *by* ROSS MCLELLAND

YOU COULD TELL by the engine noise that we were slowing down and would be landing shortly. The fields of Ireland, famous for their many shades of green, were now giving way to neatly formed housing estates, golf courses, streets and bridges. We glided over the rooftops and with a few bumps and

swishes we were firmly on the ground.

Our boys were wide eyed as they took it all in. In the reception area the aunts and uncles, parents and grandparents waited with the joyful anticipation of seeing us again, and seeing their little descendants for the first time. Then, done with the hugs and handshakes and polite conversation, we went to the >

REFLECTION, continued

country farm where it all began a generation before.

The rooms looked smaller but of course hadn't changed. The geraniums in the window were trying hard to bloom. The woodwork projects I had made in school and the fretwork pieces made at home when I was six were still proudly on display. The tags still attached reminded me of the many years my brother and I cleaned up at the local craft show.

The mornings were full of the aroma of bacon, eggs and home-baked bread. Then the boots were on and a walkabout revealed some things that needed doing.

"Those hedges all need trimming, Dad, and what about the lane?"

"Let's sharpen up some tools and get to work before it starts to rain."

We would make the trip every three or four years so our families could unite and relive the good times. For me, every trip seemed to turn into a working holiday, either at home renovating or fixing things on the farm or cleaning up at the wee "kirk" down the road.

Arriving and spending time there was truly special. The sadness came when we had to leave. In the early years when my parents were healthy it was just the pain of parting; but in later years when they were older, when Parkinson's had robbed my father of an enjoyable life, the fear was always that I wouldn't see him again.

After one trip it was time to say goodbye and head for the airport. We had packed the car and were ready to leave but only mom had come out to say goodbye. I went looking for dad and he had made it just halfway across the floor. His strong gait of years ago was now a soft shuffle.

After a hug I helped him back to his chair, and after a few words of comfort I said: "Don't worry, Dad ... I'll see you

This man, a ruling elder, small in stature but a giant when it came to helping others; this tireless worker for the kingdom of God was now on his way to his new heavenly home, to be clothed in a new heavenly body, free of pain and suffering.

again." And through the blur I stumbled for the door. It was a quiet ride back to the airport as I mulled over the possibility of not seeing him again. Should I not turn around and spend another few days with him?

We returned to Vancouver and settled back into the usual work routines, but a few weeks later came the dreaded call from my sister. "Daddy's dead," she said with a choked up voice, fatigued by a tremendous effort to restore his life. After 83 years his heart stopped beating as he was preparing for bed.

We arrived again two days later and said our last goodbyes beside an open coffin. Was this the end? How could I now hold him and say: "Thanks for teaching me about the good life, Dad, and showing me how to love without words, and reach out to someone

needing help." How I'd love to have that chance again but now it was too late.

After the service in the home we carried him past the outbuildings he and mom had built with their own hands, then down the lane past the fields he had worked to provide for his family. Judging by the large crowd of people, this small, gentle man had earned the respect of all who knew him.

The church was packed to overflowing as we sang and prayed and heard the minister eulogize his close friend.


Interment followed in the adjoining churchyard between his parents' plot and his good friend's. Yes, his good friend booked the adjacent double plot so they could be close at the end.

I have read through the Bible many times but it wasn't until some years later that I discovered some comments in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. On reading it over I remembered my parting comment, "I'll see you again" and how it meshed with Paul's own words. I realized then that I would see dad again.

This man, a ruling elder, small in stature but a giant when it came to helping others; this tireless worker for the kingdom of God was now on his way to his new heavenly home, to be clothed in a new heavenly body, free of pain and suffering. 2 Corinthians 5:1 explains this in detail and is a great comfort to me and many in this situation.

"When my earthly tent is folded and my matter goes back to the earth, I, yes I will go to my heavenly home and be clothed in a new heavenly body." Wow!

Thank you, Jesus.

I'll see you again, Dad. 

Ross McLelland is an elder at St. Columba, Vancouver.



OUTREACH

Churches' Refugee Sponsorship Builds Stronger Communities

Ecumenical and community partnerships create new possibilities.

by JENNIFER NEUTEL

AFTER A SUNDAY SERVICE IN MARCH, an extra buzz of excitement could be felt in the hall of St. Andrew's, Cobourg, Ont. After months of fundraising, volunteering and praying, the congregation was meeting a family of four Syrian refugees they helped bring to the area for the first time.

Congregation members took turns greeting the family, shaking their hands and welcoming them to Canada. A smartphone app enabled translation between English and Arabic so people could converse with the Syrian parents. The family was welcomed with cake, gifts, and cards made by the Sunday school children. ➤



The Better Together Refugee Sponsorship is a collective of 10 churches and community partners and supporters in Northumberland County. Pictured are some of the 100 volunteers involved.

John McDougall, a member of the church and sponsorship team who hosted the Syrian family at his home for their first six weeks in Canada, notes the church reception as a memorable experience.

"[The Syrian family] and everybody in the church seemed so comfortable and truly glad to see them," McDougall says. "It was just a very friendly, upbeat kind of greeting."

Churches choose to respond together

St. Andrew's is one of 10 Northumberland County-based churches that are collaborating to bring up to seven Syrian refugee families to the area. Called the

Better Together Refugee Sponsorship, the collective has several community organizations involved and more than 100 volunteers.

BTRS formed when three individuals independently expressed to their church leaders a desire to help in the refugee crisis. Through a ministerial support group meeting, several of the church leaders discussed creating a unified effort. There are two co-coordinators, several overarching committees and a core team for each sponsored family.

Rev. Neil Ellis notes several reasons it made sense for St. Andrew's to join BTRS. "The unique opportunity to work with other churches outside of the denomination on a project of this size was appealing because suddenly the church community grows together

and gets to know each other a little bit better," Ellis says. The scale of the project and being able to pool resources was also beneficial.

In January, BTRS church leaders participated in a pulpit exchange. The churches also collaborated on an area-wide Good Friday service, creating another opportunity to share about BTRS with the wider community and work on something together.

The sponsored families are financially supported by BTRS for their first year in Canada. With the pre-planning and then continuous involvement, Ellis notes BTRS is an effort that will last from 18-24 months. The ties between the churches involved will be strengthened as they support each other and the work being done, he adds.



Oakville church shines light in community

When the photo of Alan Kurdi, a drowned three-year-old Syrian boy, made global headlines in September, the mentality of people changed, says Matt Foxall.

"My inbox and my phone started blowing up after that photo," says Foxall, outreach team chair and leader of the sponsorship team at Knox, Oakville, Ont. People were asking: "What's Knox going to do about this?"

As part of their response, Knox sponsored a Syrian refugee family of six. What started as a few people asking what could be done has blossomed into a team of about 25 people who are involved in the resettlement and sponsorship process.

One member left a substantial donation in Knox's offering plate, another is a former resettlement officer who shared wisdom, and members stocked the refugee family's pantry with Middle Eastern foods.

Many of the team members are younger families who joined the church within the last eight years. There are also some people from the Oakville community who learned about the project and wanted to get involved. Some offer translation services, while one family delayed the sale of their home and offered it at a reduced rental rate, giving the sponsored family a place to live while looking for something permanent.

In addition to drawing in the local community, a fellow church in the presbytery—Glenbrook Presbyterian in Mississauga—wanted to get involved. One member left a substantial donation in Knox's offering plate, another is a former resettlement officer who shared wisdom, and members stocked the refugee family's pantry with Middle Eastern foods.

When needs have arisen, someone has been able to look after it. For example, when a discussion about health care for the family arose, an adherent and team member shared that she is a local family physician.

"It's been an amazing experience seeing the community rally around not just Knox, but around the family and everything else," Foxall says. "This is Knox just being a beacon of light within the community to say this is something that we want you to be

part of, you don't have to be a member of Knox to do that."

Cultivating community connectedness

St. Andrew's, Owen Sound, Ont., is sensing a movement afoot with partnerships and momentum building around refugee sponsorship in the Grey Bruce region. Last September, after the church's session approved a committee to explore how to respond to the refugee crisis, Rev. Dana Benson hosted a community information session on Canada's refugee system and how to sponsor refugees. Through word-of-mouth and one week of notice, approximately 50 people attended from the Grey Bruce community and various faith groups.

In the following months, 15 sponsorship groups formed out of that initial meeting, ranging from different faith groups to community members. For example, one group is a partnership between the Muslim association and a couple of United churches.

"There's been this whole community regional movement that has burst out from this, which has been so exciting," Benson says.

Now referred to as the Grey Bruce Newcomers Network, Benson

OUTREACH, continued

coordinates monthly meetings where information is shared amongst the sponsoring groups. Topics such as how to make an application, how to coordinate volunteers, and the resettlement process—with workshops on navigating the education system, supporting English as a second language, and health care—have been discussed.

The initiative has opened up new possibilities for the church and wider region. There is an opportunity to build a community of collaboration, says Benson, noting that in many regions most groups tended to work in isolation causing a fragmented way of building community.

“As a result of this we have been building bridges and opening the door for collaboration that just wasn’t there before,” she says. “People are realizing that they don’t necessarily need to protect their territory as fervently as they did and that we can achieve much better results if we work together.”

The Grey Bruce community has a unique farming and rural culture, but has struggled with a lack of diversity and declining population. An influx of newcomers—Benson estimates the 15 sponsoring groups will bring about 75 refugees in—will create a shifting of cultural attitudes and what it means to be a welcoming community.

“It’s going to change the face of Grey Bruce, and not everybody is on board with that. But the vast majority, I think, of the people are.”

St. Andrew’s chose to sponsor an Eritrean refugee family. Within a day of the family’s arrival, Benson took her son and his friend to visit the family and give them a soccer ball.

When she arrived at their apartment, the door was wide open, all lights were on, and no one was around. She found them upstairs at another



TOP: St. Andrew’s, Cobourg, hosted a welcome celebration for a new family from Syria. Janet Leadbeater (left) and John McDougall (right) are BTRS core team members helping with the settlement.


BOTTOM: Suleyman, Melek, Isa, Hilin and Emel Musa are now living in Oakville thanks to the work of a refugee sponsorship spearheaded by Knox. (Not pictured is baby Esinat.)

Eritrean family’s apartment and was enthusiastically welcomed. Two of the girls were riding their tricycles in the hallway, while the boys, who were watching Ethiopian television on a laptop, gave up their seats to Benson’s son and his friend. There were a mixture of Muslims and Christians present, and four different languages.

“I thought to myself, this is church. What we are doing here is forging a way of being the kingdom in the midst of this community. It was so powerful,”

Benson says. “They just opened themselves all the way to us and we felt embraced. Here we thought we were embracing them and we were embraced by them.”

To learn more about these projects, visit:

- bettertogetherpartnership.org
- knoxoakville.com/refugee-sponsorship
- refugeesowensound.org 

Jennifer Neutel is a member of St. Andrew’s, Cobourg, Ont.

Focus

Stories of mission, ministry and community

BE CHURCH

The Changing Face of the Church

Learning some new tricks to survive. *by* GILLIAN SECORD

NEARLY THREE YEARS AGO when the church building for St. Paul's, Prince Albert, Sask., was structurally condemned, the congregation moved into the local Masonic Lodge. "We have a few members of our congregation who are Masons, and they suggested the lodge as a potential space for us," said Sharon Shynkaruk, a congregation member. "It's a nice place, the room we meet in has these high backed chairs, and an altar already set up, so it's almost like having a church again."

The repair costs were about \$1.5 million—too high for the small congregation. So they sold the church building and moved into the lodge's basement. It may not look like church to the common imagination, but adapting to situations and surviving is a new skill many congregations are developing in the post-Christendom age.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has been in decline for decades. From >

BE CHURCH, continued

2004-2014 it lost about 14.5 per cent of its members, or upwards of 18,000 people. As numbers continue their downward slide, and congregations begin to feel the shrinking pains, many are being forced to seek out new alternatives to the traditional church model.

Sometimes that requires giving up a building. Other times, it might require a new approach to attracting young people, or a hard revision on community outreach. For others, like St. Andrew's, Chatsworth, Ont., they didn't so much lose one building as gain three.

Within Chatsworth, four struggling churches in the same area chose to come together in order to survive, rather than die out alone. They are now one congregation in four buildings.

"At first, people were very resistant to the idea, because that's not how it's done, having three ministers for four churches, and being spread around like that," said Eric MacLeod, the clerk of session for St. Andrew's. "But it's enabled us to do things we couldn't do on our own, like start a youth group. None of the churches had enough youth for one before, but with cooperation, now we can do it."

"The thing is, people want church to be like it was back in the 1960s, but they're forgetting the 2,000 years of church history that we're built on. The church has always been changing."

Indeed, the view of churches nowadays is a far cry from what the apostles would have dealt with back in the years following Jesus' death and resurrection. Our stereotypical churches are tall buildings full of people in Sunday dress, with a preacher giving a sermon in between bouts of the choir singing. In comparison, the early church existed in communities set up by believers where they shared belongings, and worshipped in their houses, often over meals.

There is no one-size-fits-all manual on what to do to save a struggling church.

As the world changed, so too did the church, evolving to serve the needs of the community, and to better preach God's message to the rest of the world. In the same way, churches today need to evolve how they preach the gospel and interact with their communities if they want to grow congregations. There is no one-size-fits-all manual on what to do to save a struggling church. Even if a solution is found, many times that solution will bring its own set of challenges.

St. Andrew's has found a lot of unique problems with being one congregation with four buildings.

"Our three ministers are constantly running around to church," MacLeod said. "Trying to balance all four locations isn't easy. They're doing a lot of commuting, so it's hard for them to get time to connect with the parish."

Or take Hummingbird Ministries in Richmond, B.C. The ministry of healing and reconciliation, which seeks to help repair relations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people by establishing circle ministries, is in itself a challenge.


"Native people can be really turned off by the church because of the long history of residential schools in this country," says elder Dorothy Visser. "Oftentimes it can be hard to reach out when they already have all this bad history, and have no desire to get involved with churches after what they've been through."

But for these churches, and many others, there are ways to find help and support. Canadian Ministries, for example, offers supporting grants to congregations in need through Presbyterians Sharing.

Not only do they offer financial support, they also offer workshops, which can help church leaders in discerning how to move forward in their ministries, as well as strategies to continue to grow their missions. For many though, these workshops are about more than learning strategic tips on mission growth.

"We're here [at the workshop] to renew our vision, yes, but it also helps to get affirmation and advice from others in specialized ministry," said Rev. Deb Rapport, founder and director of ARISE Ministries. ARISE offers street level outreach to sex workers in Toronto, as well as counselling and assistance to those who choose to come in for one-on-one case management. "Especially in the beginning, we had issues of acceptance and how we were serving, and it's really helpful to come here and get advice from people who know what it's like to be in a specialized ministry."

For many churches, the slow loss of members may sometimes feel like an unfixable leak. But even as church membership declines, there are hopeful, growing ministries all around us, challenging what it means to be a church, and what outreach can be. Their different approaches can appear odd and non-traditional at first, but churches need to adapt in order to thrive.

To learn more about the types of support the PCC offers, contact Jennifer de Combe, associate secretary of Canadian Ministries, at jdecombe@presbyterian.ca. 

Gillian Secord was the Record's summer intern. She studies at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont.



PASTORAL CARE

Choosing Life

Struggling to care for the sick, the dying, the broken.

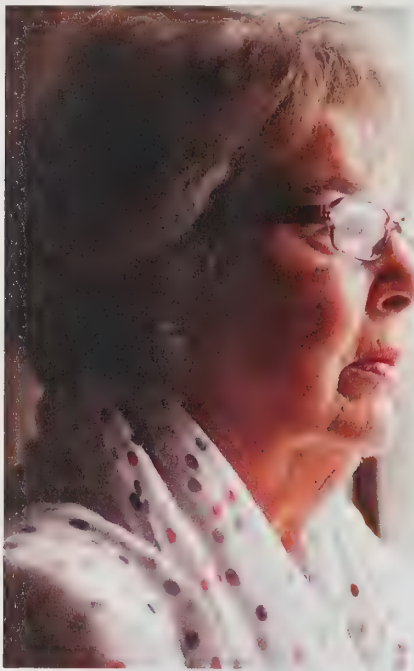
by **BONNIE BELDAN-THOMSON**

EVER SINCE I attended a conference at Presbyterian College, Montreal, in February, I've been thinking of how the church can continue to care for the sick and the dying, as it has for hundreds, perhaps 2,000 years. My journey has taken me to three places.

The first came about because of my friend, Mercia, who used Red Cross transit for her

weekly visits to her sister in a care facility. Although she appreciated the low cost of this ride, the timing was not convenient and made for a long, tiring day. I offered to drive her. Then I stayed to visit. Before long I agreed with the chaplain's request to lead a hymn sing twice a month and I have gathered a dozen people who will go with me. We intend >

PASTORAL CARE, continued



to show love to a segment of our population that moulders away, often forgotten; these are people who, in isolation, might choose death instead of life.

The next part of my path led to an arts collective where we wrestled with the challenges of funding a large creative project about sadness at Christmas. The performance of actors, dancers, musicians and visual artists would carry the audience beyond entertainment to broaden understanding and facilitate healing. While we worked and prayed over this undertaking, we grew in awareness of the needs of people from high priority neighbourhoods. After a while, we were led to a new focus and a new perspective. We discovered a book by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor ... And Yourself*. This way of seeing is exemplified by the Dale Ministries in Toronto, on which I reported in these

pages in July. We are all broken and we all have something to contribute, so we travel together. Now, in addition to our theatre goals, we are searching out possibilities for opening an art drop-in where neighbours will have a safe place to spend time expressing their creativity.

Most recently, the trail stopped at my basement apartment. My new tenant does not make it easy for me to show caring. Brock is about the same age as my adult children. He has a history of drug abuse and rehabilitation, and a bad cough that testifies to his current cigarette addiction. He has just broken up with his girlfriend of seven years. Yesterday he heard that a former user-buddy was found dead by overdose. Brock is suffering.

Nothing in my life experience has taught me how to care for someone in these circumstances. As I give the usual, but woefully inadequate, condolences on Brock's friend's passing, I plead with


the Holy Spirit to make good on promises about God's strength made perfect in human weakness. Could it be that in God's scheme of things a function of others' weakness is to increase awareness of my own inadequacy? Can Brock help me learn about God?

Brock and I find ways to live together under the same roof. We negotiate sound levels. He agrees to walk his scooter over the lawn and close the gate after he passes through. He will smoke only outside the house and will contain cigarette butts, but I have a problem with smoke that lingers on hair and clothing when he comes inside. How do I maintain a faithful Christ-like presence with Brock while determining and protecting my personal boundaries?

The self-righteous part of me says I shouldn't have to put up with infringements on my personal space. But the fact remains that people who have a difficult past and unpleasant habits need a good place to stay as much as anyone else. Maybe more. Who better to provide it than someone who follows Jesus? After all, Jesus gave up home and family for the sake of others, many of whom did not deserve or even want what he was offering.

In my struggling travels I notice that when I am in the presence of others' brokenness, my own brokenness becomes more evident. My first response is often to lay blame and to judge, even while I am aware of how much I need the forgiveness and second chances that grace provides.

Where does this need for forgiveness and grace take me?

I don't know, but perhaps I am somehow being led home after all. 

Bonnie Beldan-Thomson is a member of Malvern, Scarborough, Ont.

The Past and the Future

Three Edmonton stories.

Investigative stories by ANDREW FAIR.





ONE DAY a family walked into Westmount, Edmonton. They were a different kind of family than the Albertan congregation was used to; still they were welcomed, and that has made all the difference.

Westmount is in many ways a traditional Presbyterian congregation. It was once—and for half a century—healthy and wealthy, with a bigish church on a large lot, with a manse, in the middle of a subdivision. It's a classic mid-century subdivision, dense with curving roads, along which are comfortable homes with front yards and backyards, and plenty of green space all around. It was a planner's dream, with a church and community buildings smack in the middle. It was the very definition of post-war, mid-century Canada.

Westmount rode that wave well, until it didn't swell any longer. There were tensions in the congregation; people left; hard decisions had to be faced. Seven boilers had to be fed to keep the church warm during the long winters. The congregation was one major repair or renovation bill away from folding.

Someplace in that story a family of Karens from

Myanmar walked into the church one morning. As the congregation got to know them better, they educated themselves about the plight of the Karen people under the regime in the country once known as Burma. They are a people in flight, many taking refuge in Thailand and other neighbouring countries.

Westmount sponsored two Karen families. The sponsorship did something to the congregation—it enlivened them, made them more mission minded. They felt more engaged in their own faith. (The Karens were featured in this magazine six years ago.)

These were good things but they weren't paying the bills. The members had to decide their future. Their greatest asset was the church and the land. There was money there.

Under the suggestion of the new minister, Rev. Annabelle Wallace, Les Young, a former Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and a stalwart congregation member, went to a meeting of an inner city housing group. The Right At Home Housing Society funds and builds affordable housing in Edmonton in >

partnership with other organizations.

Young returned from the meeting excited and his passion spread through the congregation. There were meetings with the society to build housing on the Westmount lot.

Along the way, Peter Amerongen also joined the design team. Amerongen is a partner in Habitat Studio in Edmonton, which builds and renovates expensive homes. Their website is filled with jaw-dropping contemporary buildings; a new aesthetic for a new age. Amerongen started in log home construction before co-founding Habitat Studio. The high-end homes are the company's bread and butter; but establishing sustainability practices and building net-zero energy homes is Amerongen's passion.

"This is God's creation," he says. "We now know what greenhouse gasses are doing to this lovely planet we've been given. We also know how to build zero emission buildings. Shouldn't our houses of worship be zero emission buildings?"

A net-zero building is one that produces as much energy as it uses. To achieve that, energy use needs to be reduced as much as possible, and then new techniques and technologies need to be applied to create the energy needed to heat and light and cook.

The mid-century subdivision church will be the site of Canada's first net-zero energy town-house development, with a daycare, a church and 16 homes. "This is just the right thing to do," says Amerongen emphatically. He can't understand why any new building couldn't be the same.

The process has been long and exhausting at times. There have been many designs and lots of meetings. The local neighbourhood association signed on to the changes. When the project was taken to city council it passed smoothly. The council commended the Westmount team for proceeding with the project in the most perfect way.

It started with some refugees and ended with a futuristic home. The congregation has a new church, new Canadians have a home, the neighbourhood has something unique to brag about. And Canada has a new model for housing development, which Amerongen hopes to use as a "modest scale test-drive of the technology mix needed [to develop a large portion of land where an airport once was] and the carbon neutral communities to follow." Westmount's story is a parable for our times.



ANOTHER STOP ON THIS QUICKIE TOUR OF EDMONTON is St. Andrew's, another century congregation in a mid-century building. This one, however, is in a changing neighbourhood. The minister, Rev. Mark Chiang says the area is gentrifying, though it is hard to see those signs from in front of the church. There are two nice bakeries within walking distance and down the road a tattoo parlour, the new symbol of a burgeoning hipster 'hood, but the main drag, 118 Ave., has a run-down vibe.

In the Oilers' glory days when Gretzky ruled the pond, 118 was known as the Avenue of Champions, leading to Rexall Place where Stanley Cup banners once hung. The Rexall sign is down; the building will be too. A new rink, Rogers Place, has opened on 104 Ave., and the Oilers are in a quarter-century there's-always-next-year phase.

There are murals and other symbols of past glories, recalling championships, down 118 Ave. A cynic might think it an appropriate road for a string of Presbyterian churches, but they would be wrong. St. Andrew's is a progressive and generous congregation, and home to Edmonton Urban Native Ministry.

Two non-sports and rah-rah-championship murals are painted on the side of St. Andrew's, celebrating community and unity. A cross hangs between the two. That too is a parable. ➤



Petula, Muriel and Hastings
with Rev. Heinrich Grosskopf

DAYSRING, EDMONTON, was also changed by immigrants. Eight years ago, Rev. Heinrich Grosskopf, himself an immigrant from South Africa, got a call from a Cameroonian gentleman. “Could we worship at your church?” Of course, replied Grosskopf. Today West Africans comprise about a fifth of the congregation’s nearly 500 members, adherents and worshippers. Another 10 per cent are Afrikaners, come to worship with one of their own.

Dayspring’s history is not unlike Westmount’s—the congregation dates itself back a century; the building is centrally located in a post-war suburb. There are low-rise apartment buildings across the street, and also a discount strip mall. But around the corner are more expensive middle class homes. A golf course nearby has transfer fees of \$17,800 and annual fees of \$4,295—slightly selective but hardly exclusive. A solid middle-class neighbourhood.

Take a look at the congregational photo board in the church hall and there’s a nice balance between old and new faces, literally and figuratively. There are many faces, and names, that suggest an Anglo-Saxon background. Grosskopf points out a few who are legacy members. They are a connection to the traditions and culture of the congregation and denomination. There are many African faces, and also from the Caribbean; to

spot the South Africans note the names. These are new members who bring new perspectives from around the world. They energize a congregation; only if a congregation wants to be energized, of course. All together there is a stability of long-term members with the excitement of new voices.

The church’s massive backyard contains a six-by-15 metre vegetable garden. There Petula, whose husband was the one who called Grosskopf many years earlier, is standing in her boots, lined with grocery bags, weeding and harvesting. When she’s asked the most clichéd questions immigrants are asked all the time, she laughs. “We chose to come here. We knew it would be cold. You only put on something warm.” Dayspring, she says, has been an integral part of her family’s integration into Canada.

Stable and steady, with a history of careful leadership, Dayspring is a different kind of parable. Asked where he sees the congregation headed over the next while, Grosskopf talks of the missional church, of developing a deeper relationship between the congregation and the surrounding neighbourhood. ✚

Andrew Faiz is the Record’s senior editor. He travelled to Alberta—which included a tour of Fort McMurray—in August.

FORT MCMURRAY STRONG

Rising from the Ashes

text and photos by **ANDREW FAIZ**

The fire **came up from the south.**

But if you live in that part of Canada, in northern Alberta, you've encountered forest fires before.

Brenda Brewer, clerk of session at Faith, the Presbyterian church in Fort McMurray, and her husband Irvine, went to visit one of their three daughters in Carstairs over the weekend. They returned on Monday, May 2. The next day they went to the golf course, down the hill from their home. It was there they decided they'd better evacuate.

Their cars weren't gassed up. Brenda went to one daughter living in town; Irv to another. Brenda left that afternoon, two toddler grandkids in the back,

a wall of fire to their left. The youngest was crying. Brenda took over the wheel as her daughter sat with the kids. The driving was slow; the roads were packed. Tens of thousands of people were trying to get out. Her husband Irv stayed overnight with another daughter and her family. They evacuated the next morning. They didn't see any fires.

Fort McMurray, Alta., is a sprawling city at the confluence of five rivers—Athabasca, Clearwater, Horse, Hangingstone and Christina. It was here the Hudson's Bay Company built a trading post in 1870 to deliver goods to the Arctic. The old city is in the valley, but the newer subdivisions—more than half the town is less than 20



Rev. Diane Ollershaw (left) informs moderator for Faith, Fort McMurray, with Byron Bailey as he surveys the subdivision where his home once stood.

“It was like a port city at night but it wasn’t fog, it was smoke. I don’t have any respiratory issues but I had difficulty.”

years old—is on the plateaus between the rivers. Depending on where you lived, you were either in the fire zone, or not at all.

Nobody thought the city would catch because the rivers form a natural fire barrier. Certainly not Byron Bailey, an elder at Faith. He left his three-storey, split level home in the older subdivision of Abasand to meet a client at Starbucks. His house was up on a hill, in the nook between the very wide Athabasca and Clearwater rivers. He watched his house burn from the coffee shop on Tuesday, May 3. All he had was what he brought for his business meeting.

His was one of about 2,000 homes reduced to a pile of fine white ash. The fire also ate another 400 non-residential buildings. There was plenty of heat, fuel and oxidizing agents—a trifecta to feed a blaze. “We don’t think of all the things which are fire starters in our homes—propane cans, pressurized cans,” Byron Bailey explains, surveying the square of ash that was once his home. “See,” he says pointing to a metal carcass, “I had a barbeque. Like everyone else. That must have been another explosion inside the fire. One friend told me about all the explosions he heard. That was all household stuff.”

The fire devoured a few buildings on the Brewers’ favourite golf course, which sits in the bend of the Athabasca River. Plus some golf carts. It was a perfect combination of a dry spring, a strong wind and a determined fire.

It was from the golf course the Brewers could see the fire approaching their home on Woodward Lane. The fire came close. “It was like a port city at night but it wasn’t fog, it was smoke. I don’t have any respiratory issues but I had difficulty. It was pungent,” says Irv Brewer. He grabbed their box of important documents, his laptop and a backup hard drive. He monitored his house through the air conditioning app on his phone. “If it stopped giving me readings, I’d know something had happened.” Nothing did happen, though the outside temperature was extreme for a couple of days. He tried to keep the house as cool as possible via remote.

Across the street from the Brewers’ home is a park and beyond that, beautifully landscaped trails through the woods, with wooden benches and occasional vistas over the golf course and the Athabasca River. The fire licked through the woods, at one point within a dozen metres of a home.

That wasn’t just luck; it was the strategic hard work of many different fire crews working together. “The city

fire men didn’t know how to deal with a raging forest fire. And the forest fire crews didn’t know how to deal with an urban setting,” explains Bailey. “They had to work together.” And they did, making impossible decisions like forsaking Bailey’s district of Abasand and saving others.

Swaths of land were bulldozed and soaked in fire retardant to keep the flames away from homes. The heat was intense at times—the siding melted on some homes. The power went out in other areas, though the houses were untouched by the fire. Still, upon return all the houses on some streets had to replace their fridges and freezers. As of early August, three months from when the fires hit town, some houses still sit empty.

Residents have been allowed to visit their homes—or, in many cases, visit the site that was their home. Bailey tells of a neighbour who found her wedding ring in the mound of ash that was her house. Another friend returned to find her pets alive and well. She had fretted about them for ages, full of guilt and fear.

Miracles within a traumatic conflagration. Rev. Joan Heffelfinger, a retired United Church minister and a member at Faith, has a physical condition that keeps her in constant pain. On May 3 she evacuated with her son. The drive was slow and tiring. They arrived at an evacuation camp to find it full; they moved to another. After hours in the car, she thought to stretch her legs and relieve some of the discomfort. Stepping out, her legs buckled and she fell, luckily caught by her son at the last moment.

The second camp was also full and she was feeling despondent when a man, who had obviously been drinking, came to her and handed her a set of keys. “I got a room in this camp. I think you need this more than me,” he said. He kept in touch with her during the evacuation period. A moment of grace, she recalls.

THE EXPLORER ALEXANDER MACKENZIE made a reference to the pitch flowing into the rivers in 1788. Later explorers, including David Thompson in 1799, also noted that the natives used the pitch to line their canoes. That pitch—bitumen—would dominate the Fort McMurray story in the 20th century.

Fort McMurray is today, and has been for half a century, a ➤

“You aren’t taking your car to heaven. You aren’t taking your home to heaven. You aren’t taking your clothes to heaven. But, you are taking your character to heaven.”

two company town—Suncor and Syncrude—though there were previous attempts to pull the oil out of the sands. Suncor arrived first in the 1960s, with an initial \$250 million, then the largest private investment in Canada. It was deemed a huge risk. The first oil flowed in 1968, a billion dollars later. Syncrude arrived in the 1970s and started pumping in 1978.

Together the two companies built the town—they were the housing developers as well at the start. There were just under 39,000 people on the 2001 census. About 90,000 were evacuated this May. The boom, responding to international economies, has been intense. Workers have moved there from across Canada and the world. About two per cent of the population speaks Tagalog, for example. You can have injera or jerk at local restaurants. The Muslim population is 10,000-strong and is building a mega-mosque on 9.5 acres. The median family income in the municipal district is almost \$200,000; more than double Canada’s average of \$70,000. It is a young, wealthy, diverse and active community. And the two foundational companies are the benefactors. The cheques didn’t stop during the evacuation period; certainly not for senior management who worked via remote, and also not for the labourers stretched across the country waiting to return.

Oil is essential to the Alberta economy. In 2013, nearly a quarter of the province’s \$332-billion economy was in the energy sector. About a tenth of all Alberta jobs are in the oil business.

And the oil business is a rollercoaster. The highs are high and the lows are low. The oil business has been low in the past year. Fort McMurray was already feeling the pressure of crashing prices before the fire.

And, of course, the oil sands, outside of Alberta, are controversial. A recent report from the Pembina Institute shows that carbon emissions from the oil sands have increased 25 per cent from 2004 to 2014. There are other reports refuting this report; and counter-reports. In the rhetoric of our times the world’s second largest oil reserve is either the most devastating environmental blight on Canada, or the most important economic source. Health and other impacts are debated vociferously, if not intelligently.


Needless to say Fort McMurray folk are defensive. They

feel attacked. They are loyal to the industry that nourishes them, and the companies that not only employ them but also build community institutions for them. There’s an unspoken code to not talk about the criticism from environmentalists. Albertans are pragmatic people; conservative in many ways. Perhaps it is the other industry which dominates the province that defines their character: Like farmers, they continue, through good years and bad, riding circumstances. They continue. Banners declaring Fort McMurray pride and resolve to rebuild hang all over town, and on bumper stickers.

FAITH IS CURRENTLY SEEKING a minister. It’s one more thing that hangs over them, along with a struggling oil economy and the aftermath of the fire.

On July 24, Byron Bailey led the worship and delivered the meditation. He picked a variety of different Bible passages, beginning with the Beatitudes. “Our economy isn’t perfect,” he said to the congregation from the pulpit. “Our weather isn’t perfect. It wasn’t perfect early this May. Because it is not a perfect world; life is full of losses. This is not heaven. Nothing works perfectly all the time so we have trials and tribulations. And I tell you it’s been a trial. ... So today’s question is, how do you rise above the inevitable losses in life? How do we deal with the tribulations created by the fire?”

“You aren’t taking your car to heaven. You aren’t taking your home to heaven. You aren’t taking your clothes to heaven. But, you are taking your character to heaven. God is more interested in your character and its development than your comfort. These troubles are getting us ready for an eternal glory and this is a comfort. This is the warm up stage, this is preschool stage, this is the learning stage. God is getting us ready for an eternal glory and that is a comfort. You need to see the meaning and purpose in your pain and grief.

“You may have been burned out by the fire but you have a choice of whether it is going to make you bitter or better. A stepping stone or a stumbling block. God works good for those that love Him. He prepares us for eternity.” 

Andrew Faiz is the Record’s senior editor.



Faith, Fort McMurray
congregation, August 7, 2016.
Right: Brenda Brewer



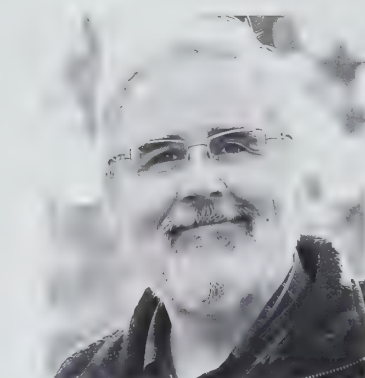
FROM THE MODERATOR

Christian Values

Self-fulfilment or self-sacrifice? *by* DOUGLAS ROLLWAGE

CANADIAN VALUES ARE in the news. Conservative leadership candidate Kellie Leitch has proposed screening immigrants for anti-Canadian values, which raises the question, "What are Canadian values?" The Charter of Rights and Freedoms begins: "Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law," but reflecting upon this, CBC columnist Neil Macdonald opines: "The sentence is true only insofar as Canada's founders were a group of professed Christians who no doubt regarded the conversion of heathens as some sort of good... But belief in God, with the moral dictation that usually comes with it, can actually be offensive to atheists."

It increasingly appears as though Canadian values can no longer be automatically equated with Christian values. This is hardly breaking news, but for many in the church today, it comes as a nasty surprise. Christianity was, after all, the dominant religious and cultural force in the founding of our nation. Canadian and Christian values and morality were to a large extent regarded as synonymous. And they had been, until a new cultural imperative began to replace the old. Canada, through its political processes and educational system and constitutional reforms and courts, has been rapidly transforming into a secular humanist society, where the rights and freedoms of the individual—the pursuit of personal gratification and self-fulfilment—are paramount, and where classic religious values—especially



A quick reading of the New Testament, however, reveals that we're not supposed to blend in, and never were. We're supposed to have different priorities, different behaviours, different core values.

traditional Christian values—are being constantly challenged.

While the church was at one time the basis and judge of society, society now judges the church and finds it out of step; society now judges the Bible, and finds it goes against the new Canadian ethos. The response of some within the church, disoriented and troubled by waning

influence and shrinking numbers, is to say, "Well, we'll simply disregard those parts of the Bible which no longer fit our Western cultural viewpoint. We'll change what we believe in order to better blend in. Maybe then, people will come back to church." Although, if the church is simply a mirror of society, I'm not sure why people would.

A quick reading of the New Testament, however, reveals that we're not supposed to blend in, and never were. We're supposed to have different priorities, different behaviours, different core values. We are to be in the world, but not of the world. (John 15:19, 17:14-16; Romans 12:2, etc.) We've been reborn into a family called the Church, which is guided and led not by the societal values of individual rights and freedoms, gratification and self-fulfilment, but by the self-sacrificial and moral high ground of obedience to the Holy Spirit, through the teaching of Christ, as revealed in the scriptures.

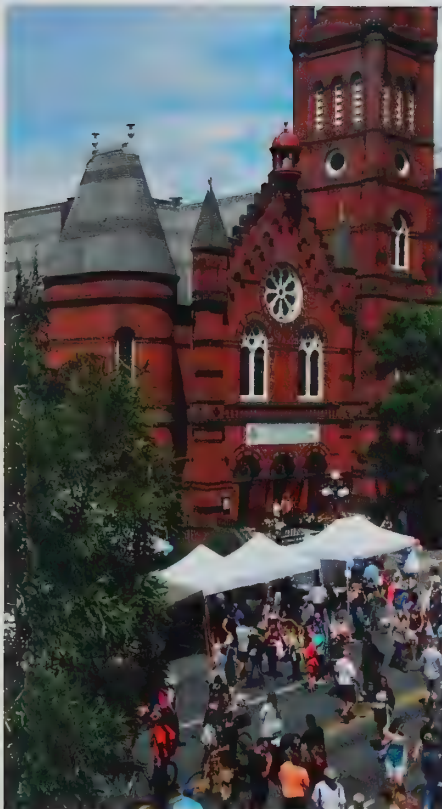
I'm a proud Canadian. There is no country I would rather call home. But as much as I value Canada, I see Canadian values moving steadily away from their Christian foundations, and in some cases, and more worrisome yet, bringing the church with it. As followers of Jesus, we must always and ever turn to the scriptures, creeds and confessions of the church, and remember what—and who, and why—we believe. There are, after all, some values which do not change. +

Rev. Douglas Rollwage is minister at Zion, Charlottetown.

& People Places

Find more online at presbyterianrecord.ca

Photographs can be uploaded at presbyterianrecord.ca.



ST. ANDREW'S, VICTORIA

What was the congregation to do when on Sunday during worship time the street was transformed into an outdoor market, complete with food, music, artisans and tons of people? The congregation opened their doors of course. Throughout the day, they welcomed many, many visitors and offered activities for children. It was one more way for the 150-year-old congregation to share Christ with the community.



KNOX, MEAFORD, ONT.

The Epic Explorers after-school program encourages children to engage with faith in creative and fun ways. Here are a happy bunch during an outdoor story time with the minister, Rev. Anne-Marie Jones.



PINAWA, MAN.

A group from the Pinawa Christian Fellowship, a multidenominational congregation recognized by the Presbyterian, Anglican and Mennonite churches, participated in the Relay for Life on June 4. The 11-member team participated "in Jesus' name" and raised just over \$2,000 to support cancer research, and to demonstrate support for cancer survivors. Pictured are Shirley Pellow, Lori Evenden, Giuliano Sanipelli, Gloria McAuley, Florence Vilks, Evelyn Vandergraaf, Tjalle Vandergraaf (team leader) and Carol Walton. Missing are Bill Evenden, George Montgomery and Joye Platford. (Photo by Peter Vilks)

THE OTHER SIX DAYS

Funny and Free

More ways to waste time this month. *by* **BRADLEY CHILDS**

FREE MUSIC AND MORE

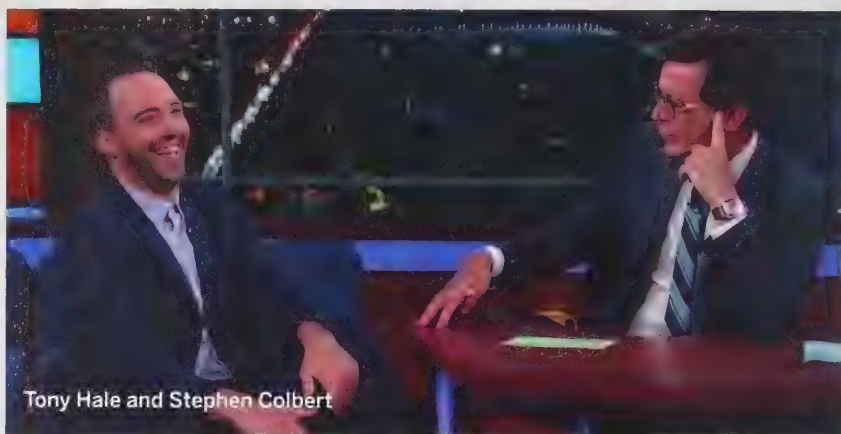
New Release Today is essentially an on-line Christian bookstore. In fact, it's the biggest one of its kind. It's got interviews with Christian artists. It's got videos. It's got movie trailers and reviews, books, a book club, concert tour schedules, and it's got seven of its own free, online radio stations. It's also a community of bloggers. And if you want, you can be one of them. Just sign up, submit something, post something, or even trade music. It's an interesting community. But why talk about a site like this? Well, because I'm a cheapskate. See, under the Music tab there is a constantly updated selection of downloadable music. And every week there is a section of free stuff. When you're pinching pennies, it's pretty hard to beat free!

FIND IT @ newreleasetoday.com.

VIDEO CLIP

Tony Hale is pretty well known as an actor. He's currently on a show called *Veep* playing the right-hand man of the vice-president of the United States. But more importantly, he's playing at my place on Netflix as my wife and I binge-watch *Arrested Development* where he plays the fantastically funny Buster Bluth. Recently Hale was a guest on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. During the interview Hale does something you don't really expect from a movie star and late night guest. I'm not sure why you don't expect it but you don't. I'll let you watch the clip to see why.

FIND IT @ youtube.com. Search "Tony Hale: My character's an awful person."



"REMEMBER WHEN?" BLOG

I'm sure you've seen those "Remember these?" or "Only an '80s kid will know these" social media posts. Well a while back, a *Huffington Post* blogger did one titled "10 Signs You Were a Christian Kid in the '90s." Now perhaps that's a bit too narrow a category for my readers but since it hit the bull's-eye clean in the centre for me, I figured I'd put it out there and see if its accuracy exceeds the boundaries of the '90s alone. Oh, the nostalgia. I can almost feel that felt-board Noah's Ark now as DC Talk's "What if I Stumble" plays on my Discman.

FIND IT @ huffingtonpost.com/lianna-carrera/christian-90s_b_1295516.html.

CHRISTIAN SATIRE

First we had the *Wittenburg Door* magazine (the godfather of modern Christian satire). Then we had *Godstuff* with Joe Bob Briggs and his hilarious show. (If you don't know that last one, it's time for you to get out your Google machine and find

out!) Next, the *Door* came online. Then we got Landover Baptist and Mrs. Betty Bowers, the best Christian in America. There have been a few good attempts at Christian satire over the years. Right now the Babylon Bee is making the rounds on Facebook and introducing a whole new generation to self-deprecation. Well, add another good one to the basket. It's a little edgier than the Bee but still worth a laugh or two. It's "The End Times: Apocalyptic Christian Satire" and it's making me smile. And it's not just church stuff. Everything from sports to fashion is on the table. I liked "Colin Kaepernick's Socks Charged with Treason" and "Hillary Celebrates Pneumonia Diagnosis by Hugging Small Child." Or how about "Fearful, Technophobic Christians Terrorized by Pikachu." So much humour to take offense to and so little time.

FIND IT @ theendtimes.news 

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at Fairview, Vancouver.

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Ministry

Opportunities

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Miramichi (Chatham), N.B., Calvin;
Black River Bridge, St. Paul's;
Kouchibouquac, Knox; Full-time
minister for a three-point charge;
Interim Moderator Rev. Jeffrey M.
Murray, 36 Bridge St., Sackville, NB
E4L 3N7; 506-536-3311;
revjeff@nb.sympatico.ca.
St. John's, Nfld., St. David's; Full-time
minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Derek
Krunys; 709-687-7742; stdavids.nf.ca.
Stanley, N.B., St. Peter's; Full-time

minister; Interim Moderator Douglas
Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton,
N.B. E3B 1M2; 507-455-8220;
deblaikie@gmail.com.

Tabusintac, N.B., St. John's;
New Jersey, Zion; and Bartibog Bridge,
St. Matthew's; Full-time three-point
charge; Interim Moderator Rev. J.
Gillis Smith, 535 King George Hwy.,
Miramichi, NB E1V 1N2;
rachmsmi@nbnet.nb.ca.

thinking full-time minister to provide
strong leadership, preach to the
practicalities and encourage new
forms of worship, music and ministry;
Interim Moderator Rev. Bill Bynum,
c/o Duff's Presbyterian Church, 319
Brock St. S., Guelph ON N1H 6H9;
congregation's profile available on
church's website, the Ministry &
Church Vocations website and from
the Interim Moderator.

Scarborough, Melville; an established
and vibrant congregation has an
immediate opening for an organist/
pianist/choir director; Chair Personnel
Committee, c/o Melville Presbyterian
Church, 70 Old Kingston Rd.,
Scarborough ON M1E 3J5; 416-283-
7719 (fax); melville_church@bellnet.ca;
copy of posting available through
church office at 416-283-3703.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Beaconsfield, Que., Briarwood; Minister
who is able to work with all ages,
connect with young families, strong
communicator and teacher of the
Christian faith; Interim Moderator
Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries; 514-288-
5256 extension 209; rdevries@
presbyteriancollege.ca; profile at
briarwoodpresbyterianchurch.ca.

Pointe-Claire, Que., St. Columba-by-the-Lake;
Full-time minister able to relate the gospel
to contemporary life and to foster a spirit
of faith and compelling witness in an open,
inclusive, dynamic community; Interim
Moderator Rev. Dr. Kay Diviney; 514-842-
3431; assocminister@standrewstpaul.com;
see also stcolumba.ca.

Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

Caledon, Claude; Part-time minister;
Interim Moderator Rev. Rebekah
Mitchell, 44 Church St. E., Brampton,
ON L6V 1G3; 647-969-5456;
mitchrr@gmail.com; congregational
profile available at claudchurch.com/
ministry-opportunity.html.

Guelph, Duff's; seeking a forward-

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Chatham, First; Part-time director
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role; for a complete job description
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5V7; eamclachlin@gmail.com;
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<http://www.facebook.com/stdavidstjohns>

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Interim Moderator:
Rev. Derek Krunys

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Owen Sound, St. Andrew's; Music director/organist, part-time position directing choir and accompanying on organ and piano; see full description standrewsowensound.org.

Simcoe, St. Paul's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Stanley Cox, 65 Tan Ave., Waterford ON N0E 1Y0; 519-443-4798; stan.cox@sympatico.ca; sppc@kwic.com; visit website stpaulssimcoe.com.

Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

No vacancies submitted.

Synod of Saskatchewan

No vacancies submitted.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Calgary, Varsity Acres; Interim Moderator Rev. Kobus Genis; 403-999-3435; kobus@wpchurch.net.

Synod of British Columbia

Parksville, St. Columba; Seeking a dynamic full-time minister of word and sacraments; Interim Moderator Rev. Jennifer Geddes; 250-218-5465; revjenng@gmail.com. ☩

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• Please be sure to include your name, the church you attend, and your age on the back of each entry.

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Obituaries

Hardie, Banning Henry, passed away on May 16, 2016 in Alliston, Ont., after 93 years of a life well lived. He is survived and celebrated by the love of his life, friend, partner and wife of 68 years, Judy (Pearl Hicks) Hardie; their three children Pat (Gord Laughren), Peter (Kathleen Cooper) and Jennifer (Chris Hinton). He is remembered and missed by brother Raymond; cherished as Grampie to Clayton (Maddie), Daimen (Estelle Drisdelle), Gavin (Ashley Broderick), Casey (Nick Rolfe), Linden (Kyle Blades), Layne and Calum; Greatest Grampie to Charlie and Aurea.

Banning was very active in the churches where he worshipped wherever he lived: Ottawa, Moncton, Tyne Valley, North Fort Myers and Toronto. He served as deacon and elder and he and his wife hosted many visiting ministers and missionaries. Together, Banning and Judy became teacher/trainers and board members of Laubach Literacy, teaching adults to read.

Forever active in thought and mind, he returned to school, studying theology at Knox College, and graduated as a lay minister at age 85. Banning's last years were spent less physically active and more contemplative as his body aged and weakened. He remained positive, grateful and content, mentally engaged with the world as he lived his meditation mantra of "being still and waiting patiently."



McCrea, Agnes Stewart (Paterson), at the age of 97 years young, joined her husband Samuel on April 3, 2016 just two days before their 76th wedding anniversary.

Agnes attended St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Sarnia, Ont., since her arrival from Scotland in 1929. Both Agnes and Sam were active members of the church, serving as elders, on the board of managers, teaching Sunday school and in various outreach groups. Agnes was presented with a lifetime membership to the Women's Missionary Society in 1976.

Agnes was predeceased by two sons and she is forever loved by her four daughters: Sylvia, Anna Mae, Nancy and MaryJane. ☩

FOR THE JOURNEY

The Incredible Worth of an Old Man

Mentoring the young. *by* DAVID WEBBER

I RECALL THE CAMP up on Ram Creek and him taking me in to see Gene the cook. I got cheese and apple pie to go with my tea. I sat beside him on the cook shack bench with my six-year-old legs dangling off in space but feeling very much like one of the lumberjacks. And later that night, after supper, he took me down to Marmalade Creek for a soak in the natural hot springs that bubbled out of the limestone rock. He had an agenda—to baptize me early into the religious mystique of the Rocky Mountains.

And there was the North Fork of White River, just above Colin Creek, a small tributary that bore his name. I was 10 and we were fishing the river. He spied a big hole on the far side. He hoisted me up onto his shoulders like a circus rider and sloshed into the river torrents. Somehow we made it to the other side and he made sure it was my line that went in first. When I hauled in a five-pound cutthroat trout, I thought he would burst. I was hooked on mountain river fishing for life. That was just one part in his disciplining me as a man for the mountains.

There were many more parts to my catechesis in which he had a direct hand. Like the time he loaded me into a tiny box-like contraption suspended on cables and we went swooping across the river. I think I dampened my pants due to its speed and height above the water. That cable crossing was the main link in the pack trail up to Maiyuk Creek pass. It had been part of his “road” as a young man when he was a trapper and forest ranger and he wanted me to know it. And there was the time he pounded his



little 1950 Willys Jeep pickup over 10 miles of raw fireguard so we could be the first ones to get a punt in to fish Monroe Lake. It was a hair-raising experience as the fireguard was suspended in many places high above the valley and was barely wide enough to accept the little truck's wheels. Many a boulder was sent crashing down the scree slopes as we bounced our way in to the lake.

He died when I was just 13; the same year John Kennedy was shot. For me his death was the more byzantine and for years it

tied me up in knots. He was the boss of the lumber camp that was my home. He was very important to every person who depended on the sawmill for their livelihood. But for me he was like a second grandpa, and a kind of rabbi of the way of the mountains. He never got to witness my confirmation, my graduation from college in forestry, but I always sort of sensed his pleasure in my caring for the bush in my first career.

I have his old rifle now, my one physical memento of him and his many lessons. It was the one he used on trouble bears when they would raid the old meat house at the Ram Creek camp. Every time I take it out it reminds me of him and his special clan. It reminds me of all the times we went out for trout. It reminds me of his many mountain lessons. More than all of that, it reminds me of the incredible worth of an old man. And thereby hangs the tale.

It strikes me that most every boy needs an old man—someone to take him in hand and mentor him in a way ➤

Given the baby boomer's dogged determination to escape getting or being old, it seems rather paradoxical that our faith holds up old age to be a virtue.

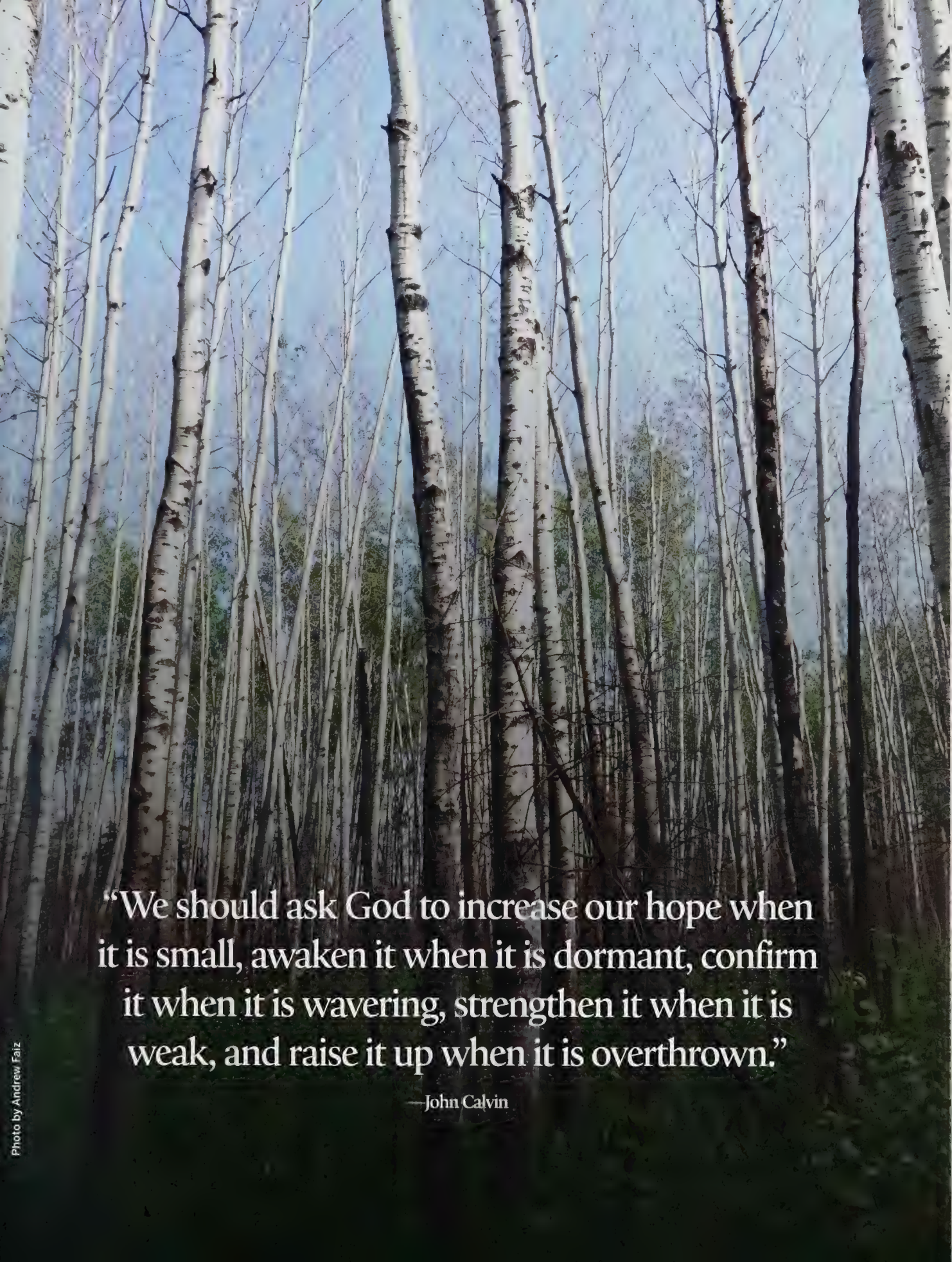
that a parent sometimes won't or perhaps can't. Most girls I expect need a similar well-aged non-familial same-sex mentor, too. The odd thing is that in this day and age there seem to be all kinds of willing boys and girls, but not many willing old men or old women. In this day and age, the job of being someone's old person is increasingly falling to the baby boomer. This exposes a challenge. In my opinion, typically we baby boomers have a chronic fear of old age along with a strong reluctance to act our age. The result is that we seem to be consumed with constantly questing for the illusive fountain of youth or running on a treadmill to escape the dreaded condition of old-fartism. The result is seemingly little time or energy left for being someone's old person and I sense, even less of an appetite for the job.

Given the baby boomer's dogged determination to escape getting or being old, it seems rather paradoxical that our faith holds up old age to be a virtue. The Bible views old age to be a blessing from God to the individual and the faith community. Old age is seen as a gift for a virtuous life and part of God's purpose in life (Deuteronomy

5:33; Genesis 25:8). The aged are held up as a resource with valuable gifts to be shared with the community. The elderly are the dreamers for discovering exciting ways forward for the community (Joel 2:28). Wisdom is seen as an attribute of the aged godly person (Proverbs 3:13-16; 9:10-11). Offering wise counsel is seen as a duty of the elderly (Joel 1:2-3; Deuteronomy 32:7; Titus 2:3-5). The aged are to function as a moral compass for the community (Titus 2:2-3). In response to this, the elderly are to enjoy honour and respect in the community (Leviticus 19:32; 1 Timothy 5:1-2).

The Bible profoundly values old age and the elderly. In my own experience, nowhere is the value of an elderly person appreciated more than in the heart and life of a child being mentored. So, being one of those baby boomers who have burst upon the dole of old age and who have ample time on hand, I find all of this both encouraging and challenging. An exciting ministry awaits me in the life of a child. And as I take it up, I know I will discover the incredible worth of an old man. +

Rev. David Webber, now retired, lives in Lac La Hache, B.C.



“We should ask God to increase our hope when it is small, awaken it when it is dormant, confirm it when it is wavering, strengthen it when it is weak, and raise it up when it is overthrown.”

—John Calvin

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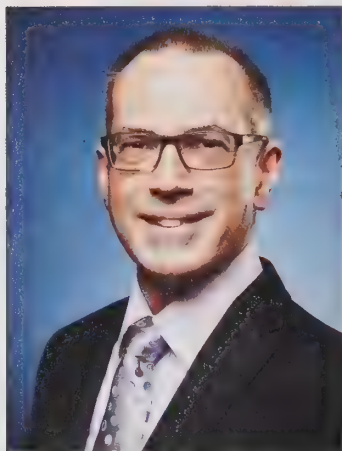
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Cover illustration by Barry Falls



Let's just say that
not only did we
leave no stones
unturned, we
went looking for
hidden stones to
look beneath.

FOR THE RECORD

Upheld By Prayer

Thank you for your support. *by* DAVID HARRIS

ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS people ask me about the closing of the *Record* is: "What's the reaction out there?"

You can read some of the reaction from readers on the pages that follow, but many other readers, friends and colleagues in religion publishing who read the magazine have sent me short private emails.

Their notes have expressed disappointment in the decision but also thanks for the work we have done and encouragement about the future.

Despite the news stories we published about the decision to close the magazine, some people remained unconvinced—perhaps it's simply wishful thinking—and thought the board's decision was precipitous.

Let me assure you, nothing about this decision was precipitous. Both staff and directors have been looking at this situation for a long time—several years in fact—trying to find different solutions. Let's just say that not only did we leave no stones unturned, we went looking for hidden stones to look beneath.

As it happens, in one of those coincidences of life, the same week the *Record* announced that the December issue would be our last was also the week that Rogers, the media giant owners of the Toronto Blue Jays, announced it is going digital with many of its magazines. *Maclean's* will go from a weekly to a monthly in print, and *Chatelaine* and *Today's Parent* will go from monthlies to six times a year.

Unfortunately, going digital was never a solution for the *Record*. We don't generate the kind of advertising revenue that

Rogers does. That's what pays employees' salaries at the big commercial publishers.


At the *Record*, we have relied on a combination of subscription revenue, fundraising and advertising. We were hoping we could derive more revenue from fundraising, but we just didn't have the time needed to make that transition.

One of the other questions I have been frequently asked is whether we were able to look after staff properly. This was also one of the board's biggest concerns. I am happy to say that the corporation has been able to meet its legal obligations to staff, guided by one of the best law firms specializing in charities, since there are many laws that come into play.

So many people have also said they have been putting us, the handful of individuals who put out the magazine and run the business side of it, in their prayers. And to them, we are all so grateful.

Much like the death of a loved one, the death of a magazine is painful to those who have worked so hard on it or on its behalf for so long. So to be upheld by the prayers of the community we have tried to serve over the years is an amazing gift.

Many of you have also made warm compliments about the content and look of the *Record*. Even as congregations have gone off the Every Home Plan for financial reasons, that news was accompanied by thanks for the quality of the magazine.

And for that, we say "thank you." 

David Harris is the Record's publisher and editor.

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

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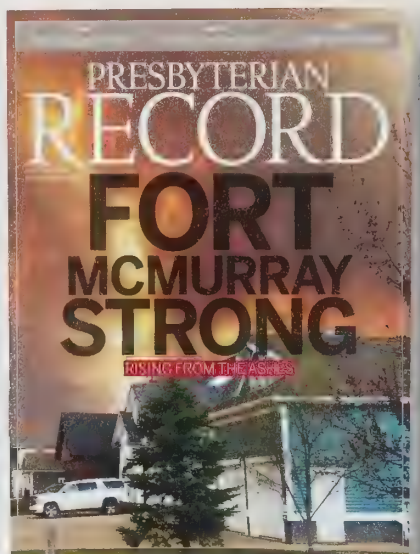
ROSS LOCKHART is an associate professor at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver. He and his wife Laura live in North Vancouver with their three children; there Ross jogs the North Shore mountains, coaches little league baseball and sips craft beer. He is rumoured to have the largest (and perhaps only) tacky religious merchandise collection of any faculty member on the UBC campus. An excerpt from his book, *Lessons from Laodicea* is our cover story this month.

LAURENCE DEWOLFE is minister at Glenview Church in Toronto. He has served other congregations in Ontario and Nova Scotia and taught preaching at Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax for 15 years. He has been contributing to this magazine for many years. "Progressive Lectionary" has been a fixture in the *Record* since October 2007.



Salt and vinegar potato chips are **TORI SMIT'S** downfall and she's been to Disney over 150 times (including Disney World, Disneyland, Disneyland Paris and Disney Cruise Line, and even does a workshop for churches on "What Disney has to teach the church about hospitality"). Tori is a do-it-yourselfer around the house, and a diaconal minister (among other things) around the church. In this issue, she shares her thoughts on welcoming children into worship.

Letters



Write to us: LETTERS@PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA

Goodbye to the Record

And thank you!

I'm so sorry to hear the *Record* is shutting down (though, working for a different small publisher these days, I absolutely get the challenges print media is struggling against). I hope this ending is also an excellent beginning for each of you.

Thank you for all the experience you gave me; for telling a 14-year-old she

could write; for also telling me when I was doing it poorly; and for the job that put me through college.

Wiser people than me will praise your excellent work, but I think I'm uniquely qualified to offer my gratitude.

ERIN ALLADIN, TORONTO

We at Renewal Fellowship have appreciated so much the opportunities we have been given to participate in the *Record*. Our executive director, Rev. Fred Stewart's articles have been well appreciated by so many of our constituents, many of whom have also been longtime subscribers. Renewal is such an important topic these days as we look to God for a way forward in our church life and we at RF continue to pray for the Presbyterian Church. We pray for the *Record*'s staff as they move on to other work and ask God's blessing on their lives. I know I have been blessed and challenged by the contents of the *Record*.

NAN ST. LOUIS, VIA EMAIL

Our voice, and the voice of the Body of Christ, just got a little softer...

DARREN MAY, FACEBOOK

I can't express how truly sad I am to hear this! I was proud to have some of my work

Pastor Shep



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published in the *Record* and have been increasingly impressed by what it has to offer as a Christian publication. It has value for any denomination while enhancing the image of Presbyterianism. Very, very, very sad!

PATRICIA ANNE ELFORD, FACEBOOK

Wow ... I'm sorry to hear this. I've enjoyed the discussions and conversations that have flourished on this Facebook site, and I understand that I am culpable for never having personally subscribed. It's sad to say goodbye to something that was so well done. Thank you.

JARED MILLER, FACEBOOK

I deeply regret this news. I can't say I'm surprised, but as a lifelong Presbyterian and reader of this magazine since my high school days, it guts all the same. Some of my first bylines were for the *Record*, and I was proud to serve for six years on the board, three of them as convener. It allowed me to support, sharpen, and defend the work of the magazine. But each meeting, we got to look at the financials, and this was the only way this story was going to end. My best thoughts go with David Harris, Andrew Faiz, Amy MacLachlan, Connie Wardle and the rest of the staff. I can't think where you—where we—go next.

MICHAEL MUNNIK, FACEBOOK

I am so sorry to hear this news. It is concerning for the denomination and the future of faith-based publications in general. Thoughts go out to all the staff. The articles are always thought-provoking and will be missed.

JENNY NEUTEL, FACEBOOK

The *Record* has informed and connected us, moderated our discussions, and very often brought the Word to us. I'm going to miss it a lot. Praying for staff to know the companionship of the Christ during this difficult transition. Thank you!

SANDRA SUTHERLAND, FACEBOOK

Deeply saddened. My prayers are with all the *Presbyterian Record* board who have struggled with the decision and with all the *Record* staff and their families. Such a regrettable loss.

MARGARET MULLIN, FACEBOOK

As a member of the board, I cannot tell you how heartsick we were at having to make this decision. As others have said, we have known for some time that this was going to be the end result. With declining revenues and increasing costs, it was inevitable. I, also, have been reading the *Record* most of my life, and I will miss it. The staff will be much in my prayers.

KATHERINE BURGESS, FACEBOOK

I join the chorus. I am sad and will miss the voices of the staff and many contributors. I know God has great things in store for them, but it is a loss to our denomination.

COLLEEN WOOD, FACEBOOK

Bob Dylan is right: "The Times They Are A-Changin'"—but not all for the better. How depressing that the *Presbyterian Record* is disappearing after 140 years. A valuable forum will be gone for learning what other Presbyterians think and are doing. Anyone who thinks there is a replacement in Twitter or online social media will be mistaken. Historians perhaps may mark this as one more pivotal event as Presbyterianism in Canada seemingly slides toward becoming a fragmented and irrelevant national denomination.

The *Record* staff, editors and writers deserve a huge thank you from all of us for continuing to produce such a high quality publication with diminishing resources. Make no mistake: Your dedication is appreciated by many. You will be missed. But as Joni Mitchell observed about loss: "Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got till it's gone."

RUDY PLATIEL, BURLINGTON, ONT. 🍅



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POP CHRISTIANITY

Keeping Christ

I was hugged in church. *by* **ANDREW FAIZ**

I got a hug from a stranger in a church. It was great.

I spent a weekend in Huntsville, Ont., and on Sunday morning went to worship at St. Andrew's. I was greeted by two men just as I entered the church; one handed me the bulletin. They were jovial; we made small talk—more than just a “thank you for coming, please have a seat.”

At least a dozen people took my hand during the passing of the peace. And a man hugged me, offering me the peace of Christ. Another gave me a firm handshake and said: “God bless you, brother.”

That was a nice sensation, I must say.

I always get nervous when I go to a church I've never been to before. I know I shouldn't—I'm a confident church-goer in many ways. I know my way around a sanctuary and liturgy. I know how to read a hymnbook and where to find biblical passages, New or Old, before or after the Psalms. I know when to stand or sit, and I know most of the common responses.

Still, going to a new church is a source of small anxiety. I know I'll feel frustrated, maybe even angry, or at least hurt—burned, I'll feel burned—if the congregation is anything less than lukewarm. And many are.

I once walked into a church where no one greeted me. I sat in the pew for a few minutes. An older woman turned around, gave me a



In our Reformed theology we build outward from Christ inside. Or at least that's how I understand it. We call it “reformed and always reforming,” which means there's no down time. We're always in the process of keeping Christ in all we do.

steely look. That could have been her “resting face” but I was already feeling anxious. I left. I picked up the morning papers and went to a coffee shop. It was great. Ninety minutes of Ella Fitzgerald on the jukebox, some


fine pastry, good substantive reviews and articles and a tasty, fancy cup of joe. Time well spent—free of self-loathing because many start by feeling unworthy of being in church.

Every time I share this anxiety with others they always assure me their church is different. I'm guessing it isn't, I say, mostly to myself, but aloud a few times. I'm guessing the congregation is really a clubhouse, with little time or room for the stranger. That is more the norm than not.

It's not about hospitality alone, of course. Hospitality is only the exterior face of an inner condition. In our Reformed theology we build outward from Christ inside. Or at least that's how I understand it. We call it “reformed and always reforming,” which means there's no down time. We're always in the process of keeping Christ in all we do.

And that ain't easy. But it was never meant to be easy. Not if you do it right.

I am a lost soul looking for a home. Anyone who walks into a church is a lost soul looking for a home.

And for one Sunday morning I found a home at St. Andrew's, Huntsville. There, a whole congregation welcomed me. They were Christ to me. I left there elated. A little less lost than when I had walked in. 

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

BULLETIN

Community and World News

WORLD REPORT

Hurricane Devastates Haiti

Aid groups are responding.

by **CONNIE WARDLE**

On Oct. 4, the strongest hurricane in nearly a decade hit the island nation of Haiti, killing more than 900 people, destroying homes and crops, and leaving a flooded ruin in its wake.

The Category 4 hurricane made landfall near the southwestern town of Les Anglais, then moved north through seven departments in Haiti before cutting through eastern Cuba, the Bahamas, and pummeling the southeastern coast of the United States with high winds and torrential rain.

"The communities in Haiti most affected by Hurricane Matthew are rural and difficult to access," said Karen Bokma, communications >

WORLD REPORT, continued

coordinator with Presbyterian World Service & Development. "People lost crops and livelihoods and, with that, the ability to feed themselves. Emergency assistance to avert the risk of famine and disease is desperately needed."


PWS&D contributed an initial \$50,000 to the emergency response by ACT Alliance, a coalition of 143 churches and church-related organizations with partners in the country.

Initial priorities include providing food, water, shelter, and basic sanitation. With widespread flooding, aid workers fear the possibility of a cholera outbreak.

According to ACT Alliance, in some departments an estimated 75 per cent of the population is in need of aid.

The destruction caused by Hurricane Matthew is especially difficult for Haiti, a country still rebuilding from the 2010 earthquake that killed over

100,000 people and caused major damage to the city of Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas.

PWS&D is calling for financial support and prayers for its partners in the region. Donations can be made online or sent to PWS&D marked "Hurricane Matthew." 

Connie Wardle is the Record's senior writer.




Soldier Finally Laid to Rest

Capt. Frances Savill, padre of the Algonquin Regiment, officiated at the burial of Pte. Kenneth Duncanson on Sept. 14 at the Adegem Canadian War Cemetery, near Brugge, Belgium.

The Presbyterian soldier from Wallacetown, Ont., fought in World War II and was killed on the morning of Sept. 14, 1944. He was laid to rest almost exactly 72 years later.

"I was reminded of the great cost of our freedom," Savill wrote of her experience. "I saw the sacrifice of so many young men like Pte. Kenneth Duncanson; each life special, each one a mother's son, a brother, an uncle, a comrade, and a friend."

Duncanson was 29 when he was killed in an attempt by the Algonquin Regiment to establish a bridgehead on a canal in northern Belgium. He enlisted in August 1942, and served in the No. 3 Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Unit and the Algonquin Regiment. His body was discovered in a farmer's field in 2014.  —CW

Farris Designated Emeritus

FORMER MODERATOR, Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris was bestowed with two more titles in October.

The board of the Vancouver School of Theology agreed to honour Farris with the title of professor emeritus in recognition "of his distinguished service to the school as both professor of homiletics and interim principal." The honour was announced at the autumn chancellor's dinner. Also at that event, the board of St. Andrew's Hall approved the designation of dean emeritus "in light of his excellent and faithful leadership of the college."

Now retired, Farris is the former dean of St. Andrew's Hall, and was acting principal at VST during 18 months of substantial transition at the school.

"This is an acknowledgement of your effective and faithful service," said Rev. Dr. Richard Topping, principal of VST, at the chancellor's dinner. "It is also an acknowledgement of your wise, good-humoured, calm and appropriately courageous leadership as acting principal. Thank you for your kind collegiality, your compassion and patience, your persistence and vision of what might be." + —AM

Cindy Blackstock to Receive 2017 E.H. Johnson Award

CHILD WELFARE ADVOCATE Cindy Blackstock has been chosen to receive the 2017 E.H. Johnson Award in recognition of her work on behalf of First Nations children and families, and her ongoing advocacy on behalf of First Nations peoples.

Blackstock is executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada and a professor of social work at McGill University, Montreal. A member of the Gitksan First Nation, Blackstock has 25 years of social work experience in child protection and Indigenous children's rights.

In January of this year, she and the Assembly of First Nations won a landmark victory when the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled that successive federal governments have discriminated against First Nations children by providing less funding for child welfare services on reserves than was provided for other children living in Canada.

The E.H. Johnson Award, named in honour of the former secretary for



World Mission in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, is presented annually to an individual or organization in recognition of work on "the cutting edge of mission."

In offering this award to Blackstock, the Dr. E.H. Johnson Memorial Fund Committee is mindful of the church's complicity in the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada, and particularly in the legacy of residential schools. The award affirms the church's desire to honour its commitments to healing and reconciliation expressed in its 1994 Confession to God and Indigenous peoples.

The award will be presented on June 5, 2017 at the church's next General Assembly in Kingston, Ont. +
—The Dr. E.H. Johnson Memorial Fund Committee

HISTORY COMMITTEE AIMS TO CELEBRATE PRESBYTERIANS

TO CELEBRATE CANADA'S 150th birthday in 2017, the Committee on

History is preparing a book on Presbyterians whose lives and work have been significant in some way.

"This book will recognize the work of people within the Presbyterian Church in Canada over the past 150 years either for faithful service, a specific accomplishment, a lifetime of achievement, or a person that was an inspiration to you," the committee said in a news release.

Submissions should be in the form of a 150-word profile, including the

person's full name, the church with which they were involved, the town or city in which they lived, and what they accomplished or how they served. Photographs are also appreciated.

The deadline for submissions is October 31, 2017. Entries can be sent to Marilyn Repchuck, convener of the committee, by email at mrepchuck@gmail.com or through the mail to 43-566 Southridge Drive, Hamilton, ON L9C 7W5. + —CW

SPONSORSHIP

An 'Agonizing' Decision

Some Presbyterian sponsorship groups offered replacement refugee cases.

by **CONNIE WARDLE**

Three refugee sponsorship groups in the Presbyterian Church have had to consider making an “agonizing” decision.

Toward the end of August, some sponsorship groups received letters informing them that, due to delays in processing their sponsored refugees’ cases, they may be offered new cases of families that are cleared and ready to travel.

If a replacement is offered, a group has a week to decide whether to sponsor the new family or to stick with the family with whom they were originally matched. If a group chooses to sponsor the new family, the government has indicated their original family would—if eventually approved—come to Canada as government-assisted refugees. If they decide to keep their existing case, they must wait indefinitely to see when or if the family will be cleared for travel.

“If we have to make this decision, or if our session has to make this decision, it’s going to be a very agonizing one,” said Klaas Kraay, the head of the refugee sponsorship team at Beaches, Toronto. His team was matched with a family of three in Turkey.

“Our session would be asked to decide between being loyal, in a way, to the family whom we have committed to sponsor, with whom we’ve been in communication, for whom we’ve been collecting everything from toys to furniture to tools—but not knowing if they’re ultimately going to come—versus helping a family that has been approved that we could help more quickly.”

As the *Record* went to press, the team at Beaches received word they

were being offered a new family similar to the one with whom they had been matched. As of press time, no decision had been reached.

Another group, this one at Lakeshore St. Andrew’s in Tecumseh, Ont., faced the same choice. They decided to accept a new family.

“The drama is not really here with our sponsorship group. The drama is really in Amman, Jordan, with a family waiting to come here to Canada.”

A third team made up predominantly of members from Rosedale, Leaside, and Morningside-High Park churches in Toronto, could have to make the decision in the future.

All three groups were matched with families through the Blended Visa Office Referred program during the government’s push to bring 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada. They had expected the families to arrive quickly.

The tri-church sponsorship team got word in January that their family could arrive in as little as three days.

“We’d already raised about \$60,000,” said Rev. Wes Denyer, minister at Rosedale. “We’d wound up our teams to go. And then we waited, and we

waited, and nothing happened.”

While waiting, the team got in touch with the family of four, who are currently in Jordan. They were packed up and ready to go because they had also been told they could be leaving on a moment’s notice.

“The drama is not really here with our sponsorship group,” he said. “The drama is really in Amman, Jordan, with a family waiting to come here to Canada.”

Denyer said his sponsorship group has “had lots of discussions and lots of strong opinions expressed” about whether or not the group should accept a travel-ready family if one is offered. They haven’t made a decision yet and won’t unless they have to.

Speaking strictly for himself, Denyer said he would choose to keep the existing case. “Obviously they [the refugees] have no power whatsoever. But we continue to have some power here. ... My feeling is we just need to stand by this family, we need to stay the course and continue to harass our MPs and try to get something happening.”

Sometimes stories about the dilemma facing sponsorship groups have emphasized “how difficult it is for the sponsorship group to wait,” Kraay said. “I just want to emphasize that that’s an extremely minor difficulty relative to the difficulty the families face. It’s a little bit frustrating for us, but our lives continue and that’s just not the case for people who are caught up in the biggest refugee displacement since World War II.”

Connie Wardle is the Record’s senior writer.

Faith.

Deepening your relationship with God

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY

Open to Change

The TRC reading challenge.

by KATIE MUNNIK

WHEN YOU READ a story for yourself, you let it in. Reading is an act of vulnerability. We don't know how stories might change us. We don't know what might happen.

After the final Tragically Hip concert last August, Alan Herbert, retired director of Gracefield Camp and Conference Centre, posted the following message on Facebook:

"On Saturday night Gord Downie challenged all Canadians to understand the plight of our Indigenous peoples and take responsibility for corrective action. Imagine if all 11 million of us who heard Gord's call to action took the time to understand this country's painful past. Imagine if all of us understood how the legacy of residential schools and colonization continues to shape the lived experience of Indigenous communities... It begins with understanding, and the best way to start is to read the TRC final report. Join me in reading the report." >



KALEIDOSCOPICALLY, continued

So I did. I am. It's a long document—364 pages—and it's a hard read, too. There are so many things I wish I didn't know. But I am glad I am reading.

Alan's post is part of the larger Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reading Challenge which was launched by B.C. writer Jennifer Manuel. Manuel emphasises that this is not a government project and that she is just a someone who wants more people in Canada to pledge to read the TRC report for themselves. Her initial goal was to have 1,000 people pledge by June 21, which is Aboriginal Day in Canada. Now well over 3,000 individuals have pledged. The Reading Challenge is a way of demonstrating that people are listening to the stories of Indigenous Canadians.

Reading the report, I am impressed by how many names and voices have been included. There are no vague anecdotes, only memories. This is a concrete work of history-making. I am learning that there is so much they never taught me in high school. Even at university, when I took a course in Contemporary Religious Situation, there was no mention of the troubled relationships between churches and Indigenous communities.

But through the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we know now that this is our history—nationally and denominationally. Last month, Gord Downie and comic artist Jeff Lemire published *Secret Path*, a linked book and album which tell the story of Chanie Wenjack. He was 12 years old when he ran away from the Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in Kenora, Ont., and his subsequent death from hunger and exposure sparked the first inquest into the treatment of Indigenous children in Canadian residential schools. The school was run by the Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church. This is our story.

I am devastated by the calm assumption that the Government of Canada held for so long that Indigenous people were considered unfit to make decisions for their own children.

On the *Secret Path* website, Gord Downie wrote: "All those Governments, and all those Churches, for all those years, misused themselves."

The institutions of government and church are meant to serve the people and yet for many over many years, their authority and power was misused and people were hurt. I am devastated by the calm assumption that the Government of Canada held for so long that Indigenous people were considered unfit to make decisions for their own children. I grieve for the loss of language suffered coast to coast because without our languages, how can we begin to understand our hearts? I hope that by reading the stories shared through the truth and reconciliation process, we not only create a permanent record of the residential school experience, we are also establishing a practice of listening to each other.


In the spring of 2008, I attended the launch of Remembering the Children, a cross-Canada tour promoting the then-upcoming Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It was a remarkable occasion in the Grand Hall of the National Museum of Civilisation with drums, dancers and powerful, hopeful words. At that time, Phil Fontaine, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations and himself a survivor of the residential school system, said the sad story of the residential schools

"belongs to the country." It is ours to hold in our humble hands that we might not misuse ourselves again.

The TRC Reading Challenge demonstrates that we are listening individually as well as institutionally. The website includes a personalized page where readers can keep track of pages, as well as see statistics about themselves and other readers. While I don't think that competitiveness is helpful, accountability is. It is good to be held responsible for my pledge to read. To lean on Paul, I feel called to be a doer, not just a hearer, and reading is my action. I hope that many others feel that way, too. This might be how we are the church—by each taking our part and not delegating our work to a vague or abstract collective identity.

It isn't easy to open ourselves up to these stories but this is healing work we can do. We can each listen, receive, mourn and remember. We can begin to understand. We can be open to being changed.

As Jennifer Manuel puts it: "There's no deadline. It's not a race. It's a commitment."

If you want to find out more about the TRC Reading Challenge, please visit trcreadingchallenge.com. 

Katie Munnik lives in Cardiff, Wales, with three kids and a professor husband. She blogs at [The Messy Table](http://TheMessyTable.com) on presbyterianrecord.ca.



The Resurrection by Sebastiano Ricci, c. 1715-16

PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

What Are We Waiting For?

God is already with us. *by* LAURENCE DEWOLFE

November 27, 2016
First Sunday in Advent
Matthew 24:36-44

DO YOU BELIEVE JESUS WILL COME again, anytime, maybe soon? Don't say: "The Bible says he's coming." Do you really believe it, in your heart of hearts? Do you live every day with expectation?

I'll go out on a limb here and say that most of us in historic denominational churches don't really believe Jesus could come back in a recognizable form anytime soon. We take the predictions with a heavy dose of salt, peppered with stories of the many disappointments expectant believers have experienced. Some of us might say we figure we'll see the predictions come true in some way when we close our eyes in death. Not while we're still alive.

We know, after all, that the first couple of generations of Christians expected to see Jesus split the sky and come back down to earth while they were still alive. The hard path of discipleship they were on wouldn't be too long, and there would be a reward at the end of it. Some were afraid they wouldn't see what they hoped for as they saw other disciples end their journeys in natural death. That's one reason Paul wrote to the Thessalonians. But even he thought he might still live to see the great and glorious day of Christ's reappearance.

We have to put predictions back into their frames, in days of distress and confusion. The whole New Testament comes to us from a time when followers of Jesus were still figuring out what they believed and how they were supposed to live. How and where did they fit in the world in general and the Roman Empire in particular? ►

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PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY, continued

Hoping, longing, waiting impatiently for an end kept them going. That's "end" in the sense of fulfilment, and in the sense of an ending. And in the sense of just desserts: vindication for them and condemnation for others.

Put the predictions back into their frames. Don't try to squeeze our times, our challenges, our crises into those old frames. They don't belong there. We don't, either. Our ancestors in faith needed to remember Jesus in a particular way. They repeated and coloured his words to meet their needs. They didn't have the inheritance of faithful, Spirit-guided reflection on the story of Jesus that we take for granted. Time was running out for them. We could say it is for us, too. But we can't say it and mean exactly what they did.

What can we say? We've lost the certainty of the first generations of believers that Jesus would come back soon, and the reason for it. We've also lost the sense of both the immanence and imminence of God in Jesus that they took for granted. God, as we know God in Jesus, is already, always present with us. In our world. In our time. Moments of decisive encounter with God, as we know God in Jesus, are always imminent. In any hour. In every crisis. With every person we meet.

If there's an advantage to hearing these predictions in our run-up to Christmas, it's this: For us everything is within the frame of Emmanu-el, God-with-us. The Incarnation of the Word, God-become-flesh like us and for us, is the end of all our hoping, longing and waiting. That's "end" in the sense of fulfilment. Maybe in the sense of an ending, too. We don't need to watch and speculate, and try to rationalize our disappointment. We're surrounded with signs of presence and calls to action. ☩

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe is minister at Glenview, Toronto.



RENEWAL

Mass in Motion

Have we settled for less? *by* **DUNCAN CAMERON**

TOM COCHRANE SANG “Life is a Highway,” but that musical metaphor of the journey is one that God’s people have been taking to heart for more years than Yonge Street has miles. Ancient Israel’s beginnings were as a travelling people—travelling with God, to God, and sometimes (at least metaphorically speaking) away from God!

We sometimes see that history of travelling begin with Abraham and Sarah. But a quick look at Genesis 11 shows that it actually began a generation earlier, with Abraham’s dad, Terah: “Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot ... and his daughter-in-law Sarai ... and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan.”

The only problem is that the extended

family didn’t make it to Canaan. Genesis says “but when they came to Haran, they settled there.” Like so many journeys, their’s grinds to a halt before reaching the intended destination. And those few verses provide a meaningful reflection point for all of us who would travel with God, both as individuals and as part of the community of the church.

Like Terah and his family we set out, hopefully with enthusiasm, towards a God-given goal, “the promised land,” “the undiscovered country.” We want to be in the place that God wants us to be, and be the people whom God wants us to be. But somewhere along the way, we lose momentum. It may be that life, even life in the church, has worn us down. It may be that, like the church in ➤

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RENEWAL, continued

Ephesus, we have simply abandoned the love we had at first (Revelation 2:4). The journey we began with such enthusiasm has drained us. We want to be done with walking, if only for a while. And, when that happens, then like Terah we “settle.”

Now, at least in English, “settle” is a word with multiple meanings. In this case it means that they established a home. They put down roots. The problem was that they came to feel at home in a place they weren’t meant to be. Of course, for us, “settle” can also mean accepting less than is due, promised or desired. And they seem to have done that, too!

So here are some questions for us to think about on our journey with the living God, whether as individuals, congregations or as a denomination: Where have we come to feel at home that is not a part of God’s plan for us? Where have we settled for less than God has for us, or stopped short of what God intends for us? And how are we feeling about the journey? Is it still fuelled by that first love, or are we feeling like it has run us into the ground? Has our former momentum been transformed by our settling into inertia?

In physics, momentum is a property of mass in motion. Inertia, however, is the resistance of a mass to any change in motion. For an object that has stopped, or settled, a fresh application of force is necessary to overcome inertia and impart momentum once again. And that’s precisely what happens in Genesis 12 when God calls Abram to get up and go to Canaan—Abram receives a divine impartation of momentum. To me, that’s not a bad description of renewal. 

*Rev. Duncan Cameron is minister at
St. Andrew’s, Scarborough, Toronto.*



SHARING WITNESS

My Parents' Gift

Thank you, Mom and Dad. *by* VIVIAN KETCHUM

Hello Mom and Dad,

I took the church on a walk with me for a whole year—through my words in a monthly column in a church magazine.

I shared my personal experiences of residential school with the church. I shared my feelings, the pain and sorrow of being in

such a place as a young child. I even got to share a picture of the two of you in one of my columns.

Remember when Dad used to gather us up to take us for a walk through the bush? It was so exciting when it came to blueberry picking time; I got to be carried on his shoulders. I felt a similar excitement >

SHARING WITNESS, continued

when I was asked to be a monthly columnist by the editor. It was so exciting to be on a new adventure.

I walked with them with the words that were in me. I did it with the courage that Mom gave me. Mom, you always encouraged us to do something, to create change. Your gift to me. I also did it in a storytelling way that Dad taught me. I recall how Dad used to tell us stories with his shadow finger puppets on the wall. The gas lamp flickering in the background. The sound of his soft voice weaving stories in the dimly lit room. Both of you taught me well.

I remember you two so fondly. I try to hang on to the good memories I have of both of you. The Miss Beasley doll you bought me as a child from a mail order catalogue. My first real doll. It must have been expensive to order that doll for me. Money was tight or non-existent back in those days. I wish I had that doll longer, but my brothers and sisters took my doll apart to see what

All I can recall is his soft, gruff voice and his laughter. Sadly, I have lost the language I spoke as a child. Mom, you tried to teach the written syllabics of our people as a young woman. I refused to sit and learn by your side.

made it talk. The special joys of having siblings. Still, I used the memory of that special gift when I had to share my residential school story with the lawyers. It was like you two were with me that day.

Mom, I also shared a small part of your story in my column. Now that I am a parent and have walked in the same footsteps as my parents, I understand why both of you didn't want to share your story with your children. I want to pass on to my children and grandchildren the good parts of my culture. Good memories. Like when Dad danced his hoop dance for us children. The years of his age melted away as he danced for us. It would be the last time he would dance for us. That is what I want to pass to my children. The beauty of our culture, not the fears of my past.

I remember Dad doing the shadow puppets on the wall, but I can't understand the words he is saying. All I can recall is his soft, gruff voice and his laughter.

Sadly, I have lost the language I spoke as a child. Mom, you tried to teach the written syllabics of our people as a young woman. I refused to sit and learn by your side. I was so ashamed of being the person that I was. Now it is all memories of regrets of the past.

As I write this letter, I am finding bits of my language that would fit better with what I am trying to write. Like the Ojibwa nickname you had for me. One-Who-Talks-Too-Much. How well I have lived up to that name. I am a columnist and a freelance writer. You two would have loved reading some of the articles that I have written. One can see how much you two have inspired me by the words I have written.

My column was well received by the readers of the church. I have written the words with my heart. To teach, not to hurt. Too much hurt and pain on both sides. The church and the Indigenous community. It is time to heal from the past.

I walk with the church with the memories of my past guiding me.

Thank you, Mom and Dad.

Love,

One-Who-Talks-Too-Much

Vivian Ketchum is Anishinabe of Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation, outside of Kenora, Ont. She lives in Winnipeg.

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Life

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FAMILY

My Story

Trust and be blessed. *by* **MONA SCRIVENS**

I WAS BORN INTO A SIKH FAMILY. My parents immigrated to Canada from India before I was born. So I am first-generation Canadian and first-generation Christian. Becoming a Canadian was easy. Becoming a Christian, well, that's another story.

It happened my last year of high school—a powerful moment in time that changed the trajectory of my life forever.

My decision to commit my life to Christ didn't solve any of my life's challenges. My parents were still divorced, I was still the only brown girl in an all-white school, and I still hated math. Instead, I now had a new set of problems. My parents who never agreed on anything now both agreed that their only child had lost her mind.

My agnostic, scientist father would say to others: "She's going through a phase. It won't last." To me he said: "As long as you keep getting A's in school, I don't care what you believe in."

For my Sikh mother, however, my becoming a Christian was devastating. To her, not only was my faith a rejection of her religion, it was >

FAMILY, continued

a rejection of her. It was heart wrenching. My desire was never to hurt my mother; my desire was to follow Jesus.

Over time I fell deeper in love with this amazing God. After completing my undergrad degree, I felt called to seminary. Honestly, it made no sense. What was I going to do with a degree in theology? Why would God send me there? Again my parents united with a resounding: "Don't be stupid."

But the call was clear. So, penniless, scared and without the support of my family, I moved to Toronto to attend seminary. I was tormented. I ached for the respect of family and the security of home, and yet, the teaching was phenomenal and I soaked it all in, bathing in God's grace.

After my first semester at seminary my mother encouraged me to join her on a trip to India to visit my ailing grandmother. I received this as a step towards reconciling with my mother, but I knew that it was going to be difficult explaining my new faith to my devout Sikh grandmother.

When we arrived in India, my uncle picked us up from the airport. No sooner had we settled into the car when he informed us that he had taken it upon himself to find three men who would be suitable candidates for marriage. My Hindi was rusty but I understood perfectly that those candidates were for me! All were religious Sikhs—one was a doctor, the other an engineer and the last a prominent businessman living in the States.

I was shocked. No, I was terrified. I reached for my mother's hand and squeezed, silently screaming, "No!"

My mother patted my hand with hers and quietly said to me (insert Indian accent): "There's no harm in looking, nah?"

I was out of my element. I could do nothing but abide and pray. And pray I did. I felt completely trapped.

Long before cellphones and text messages, the doctor came to meet me but I was travelling with my cousins. The businessman had to fly back unexpectedly to the States, and the engineer took ill and we too were unable to meet. I've always felt bad about that one; after all, those were mighty prayers I prayed. And God answers prayers.

A week before leaving India, my mom and I sat down with my grandmother to explain that I had converted to Christianity, and that instead of going to teacher's college I had decided to pay money to learn more about God.

My grandmother was a formidable force, maybe more so in her ailing state. Nobody crossed the matriarch of the family. I believe my mother dreaded the conversation as much as I did—though I was convinced she was hoping my

grandmother would knock the Christianity right out of me.

As I explained my situation to my grandmother in my primitive Hindi, I had visions of being locked up in a room and my passport destroyed. But something happened—something very unexpected. My grandmother was pleased, even happy that I had a faith in God. She was even happy that I was studying theology. I could never have imagined such a response. My mother and I sat there stunned.

I left India with not only my grandmother's blessings by my mother's, too.

I still shake my head in amazement of God's love and faithfulness. But why am I surprised? The scriptures are filled with such stories.

In 1 Kings 17:7-16, the prophet Elijah was enjoying the restful protection of the Lord at the bottom of the Kerith Ravine. Then one day the brook dried up, and his time of being fed by ravens ended. The Lord told him to go to Zarephath where a widow would feed him.

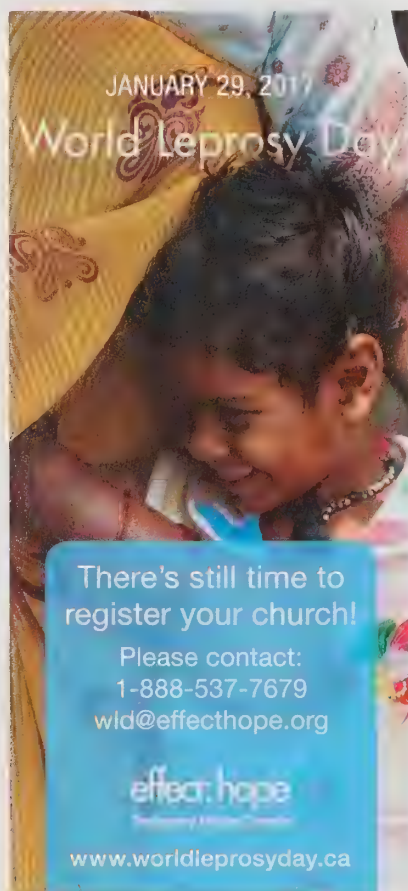
This new direction from the Lord didn't make any sense to the prophet. Zarephath was hit hard by famine, it was in the heart of Baal worship and the evil queen lived in the area. Elijah was probably wondering: "Why would God send me there?"

But Elijah knew that if God had given him the order that God would provide all he needed. I love verse 10; it simply says, "And so he went to Zarephath..."

For me, following Jesus cost me my family. I remember crying myself to sleep and yet knowing deep down inside it was where I needed to be. And God has since brought healing to my family.

My prayer is that we have the courage to trust like Elijah. If we do, we will be blessed beyond our greatest imagination. +

Rev. Mona Scrivens is minister at Amberlea, Pickering, Ont.



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REFLECTION

Bearing Witness

Listening to others allows God to show up. *by* SHARON RAMSAY

THE IDEA OF “bearing witness” has been rattling around in me for some time. What does it mean? Bearing witness prioritizes the experience of the person or group over the questions the listener might have. To bear witness is to see, hear, know and remember what has happened.

As a marriage and family therapist, I witness the telling of personal narratives all the time. However, in that exchange, the roles are clear and I’ve received training to help me sit with individuals, couples and families as they reveal the intimate details of their lives. I know what to do. Everyday life is not necessarily measured in >

REFLECTION, continued

60-minute segments and so bearing witness is tricky.

I want you to consider how we can each see and hear what is happening around us so that our attention is actually a catalyst for change. Notice that I said our attention—not our great suggestions, not our retelling of our own similar experience, not our disbelief. Our attention can create space for meaningful change in the life of the storyteller: let our presence in the lives of others create moments for the glory of God to show up.

To open any media feed right now is to be overwhelmed by a never-ending stream of stories about the lived experience of individuals and communities on the local and global scenes. Given the sheer number of reports, tweets, blogs and the like, we can find ourselves unmoved, uninterested, immobilized or activated in seconds. If we also consider the events of our personal and professional lives and the people with whom we interact on a daily basis, we have quite a cacophony of voices clamouring for our attention.

Consider a New Testament example. In John 9 the disciples encounter a man born blind and ask Jesus: “Who sinned to cause this man to be blind? Was it him, or his parents?” Perhaps they were trying to out-Jesus Jesus, having seen him get to the core of the matter with others he had encountered. However, Jesus was focused on an entirely different agenda. His position of openness allowed him to step back from a narrow focus and declare that blindness was not the issue at hand but rather, in that particular moment, the opportunity for the glory of God to be on display in that man’s life. To bear witness is to be open.

Sharing our story is a delicate business. While we might be somewhat

**We live in a time
where there is
a clamour for
attention, but focus
is fleeting. There
are stories from
the distant and
recent past that
are surfacing, and
attending to those
who have a share in
those events will tell
us something about
the human condition.**

ambivalent about what to share and how to share, we may also be concerned about if the listener will actually listen. The response of the listener, whether the first or one of many, often tells us how much of our story we can actually and safely share.

When we bear witness to the lived experience of another and agree to connect, it seems to me that we make space for core human emotions to be expressed. These core emotions are often listed as fear, joy, happiness, sadness, anger, surprise and disgust. Regardless of the details of the story, we may find ourselves resonating deeply with the crush of fear, the wellspring of joy, the hum of sadness, and the roar of anger. Now we understand something of the impact of the story on the teller because we’ve heard the stirring of the human heart,

whether that heart sits across from us or is crying out from a location somewhere else in the world.

We are encouraged to weep with those who weep and to rejoice with those who rejoice. We are told to bear one another’s burdens. We are asked to watch our expression of anger. These are actions that arise from bearing witness. The time for deciphering, fact-finding, decision-making will come in due course because there is a time for everything under the sun.

What impact might it have on the billions of narratives that could be shared if the first encounter was met with an openness of heart which welcomed the emotions that shape the story? What change could we unleash in the world if we could make space for the storyteller to speak freely about their experience of joy, hope, disappointment, shock, etc., without having to carefully curate the story for the listener? What if the act of telling the story as it is known was a good enough reason to listen carefully?

We live in a time where there is a clamour for attention, but focus is fleeting. There are stories from the distant and recent past that are surfacing, and attending to those who have a share in those events will tell us something about the human condition. May we replicate the act of radical hospitality that the Lord gave each of us by showing up in those moments where someone needs a witness to the fear, joy, sadness, anger, surprise and/or disgust that has influenced their life. Let us give the gift of presence. Things change when the Lord shows up. ✚

Sharon Ramsay, MDiv, RP, RMFT, is a therapist. This is excerpted from a speech she gave at Q Commons earlier this year.

KNOX COLLEGE

Caring for People

EXPERIENCE-BASED LEARNING AT THE CENTRE OF SOCIAL ACTION.

BY STEPHANIE HANNA

“This is about holistic care of people. I feel it is a privilege to be invited into the sacred space of patients and their families at times when they are most vulnerable, and also when they experience great joy,” said Virginia Gabriel, a student in the new Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS) degree

program at Knox College. Virginia was a registered nurse before she felt God’s call to chaplaincy; she now wants to minister to spiritual as well as physical needs. With a background in both theology and psychology, she values a “firm grounding from which to minister to patients” and sees Knox’s MPS



EDUCATION



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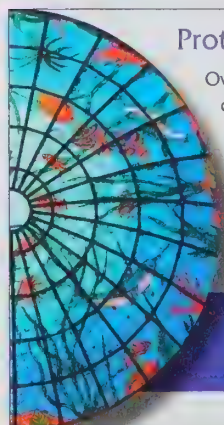
as a vital foundation.

Knox College's new Master of Pastoral Studies program broadens graduates' opportunities to serve in societal and non-profit organizations, in addition to serving within the church. They'll be equipped to lead in lay and ordained ministries in faith communities, pursue careers in the non-profit sector, and work as institutional chaplains, spiritual care practitioners, psycho-spiritual therapists, and community workers. Addressing the need for renewal in the church, Knox College is reclaiming one of the Presbyterian Church's founding values—to be at the centre of social and community action.

Begun this September, the program is already drawing students from a variety of backgrounds and life situations. MPS student Angelica Atkins is an art therapist. She said, "I value my art therapy training—yet I felt something was missing at the heart of it. While art and a therapeutic relationship help to express and ease suffering, nothing short of an encounter with Jesus can bring true transformation and healing." Knox's MPS is "a unique opportunity to integrate Christian faith with professional training in psychotherapy," said Angelica.

Innovative, hands-on, experience-based learning and leadership development opportunities. Lots of new things are happening at Knox College, but this focus on leadership development through experiential learning is a top priority. Knox is currently seeking applications for a new position—director of experiential and innovative learning, and assistant professor of leadership—and raising funds for specialized internships. ●

Stephanie Hanna is communications and marketing associate at Knox College, Toronto. To learn more: knox.utoronto.ca/mpsstudents.



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THE PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE

Revitalizing Traditions

PREPARING LEADERS.

BY GLEN DAVIS

Society has changed. Communities have changed. Congregations struggle to meet the challenges of change. Preparing leaders equipped to meet those challenges is critical. And that is where our colleges come in. The Haynes Report in 2011 concluded: "The greatest leverage point that the ... PCC has in influencing change is the training of clergy in our theological colleges." The Presbyterian College is committed to providing leaders equipped to help those congregations. We have learned that to continue doing the same old things in the same old way while expecting different results is not the way to thrive.

So we are trying some new ventures. For example, we believe the PCC should be

planting more churches than it is closing, so we have added a church planting option to our M.Div. program. We believe there are ways to revitalize traditional congregations, so we have added a congregational renewal component. We believe the college has a role to play in helping young adults to discover their gifts, so we have adopted a dependable strengths program to assist young leaders in taking their faith into the workplace. We believe it is essential to walk with our graduates after ordination, so we developed a mentoring program to support them in their early years of ministry. We believe that many pastors need opportunities to recover their love of ministry, so we are instituting a pastors-to-pastors program. We believe that

international churches, as well as our church and our students, can benefit much from the presence of young leaders from international partners, so we started the Faith to Faith-Face to Face program.

We are gratefully building on the faithful work of those who went before us, and embracing God's creative work among us today. We welcome students to this new day of preparing for leadership in a changing church. ●

Rev. Glen Davis is director of communications and alumni relations at Presbyterian College, Montreal, and is a former moderator of the General Assembly. To learn more: presbyteriancollege.ca/admissions.

EDUCATION

ST. ANDREW'S HALL

A Community of Disciples

DOING CHURCH DIFFERENTLY.

BY BOB PAUL

We are convinced that discovering the new things the Holy Spirit is doing and wants us to do as we participate in God's mission requires an engaged, experimental approach to learning by doing. In addition to a growing lineup of courses in evangelism, missiology and church planting, three new programs were developed and initiated this year, which move our work of educating beyond the classroom, beyond our own building, and into direct engagement with the wider community.

First is the Salt and Light Experiment, in which two groups of students in the midst of our residential facility have volunteered to live in intentional Christian community. These women (salt house) and men (light house) are ordering their life together through a rule of faith and life focused on prayer, hospitality and witness.

Second is the Emmaus Experiment. With the able assistance of our senior fellow, Dr. Darrell Guder, we are working

with over 50 different people from local churches, training teaching and ruling elders in how to start new missional projects in their local neighbourhoods.

Third is St. Andy's Community Table. Is there any better way to learn how to lead a church in today's culture than to actually lead one? This is a student-led, faculty-supported experiment in "church re-planting," using space in West Point Grey Presbyterian Church on the edge of the UBC campus that otherwise would sit empty on Sunday evenings.

St. Andrew's Hall, in partnership with VST and the other colleges here in Vancouver, is a company of learners, a community of disciples following Jesus, engaged in the adventure of discovering what God will do in and through us by the power of His Holy Spirit. •

Bob Paul is dean and professor of mission theology at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver. To learn more: standrews.edu.



EMBRACING MISSION

DEPENDABLE STRENGTHS
A program designed to help young adults discern their gifts and calling in life

The Presbyterian College helps young adults discover those gifts and abilities that are unique to them and to consider how they can best be used to enrich their own lives and the lives of others.

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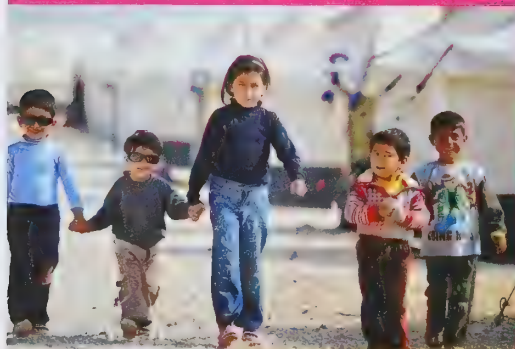
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is the development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. PWS&D's sustainable development programs help communities around the world overcome poverty. Find out more at WeRespond.ca.

PVHR01

Empowered to Prosper

PWS&D works to combat injustices through a shared commitment to human rights. Your gifts will help heal injustices and promote equal opportunity for all.

\$42 provides psychosocial support to child victims of abuse

\$200 trains a woman in advocacy and empowers political participation

\$260 provides victims of gender-based violence with psychosocial and medical support

\$870 produces a radio ad on the prevention of gender-based violence

PWEDU01

A Classroom for Every Child

While we often take education for granted, many children in the developing world – especially girls – never have the opportunity to go to school. Education is one of the most critical tools in breaking cycles of poverty. By opening classroom doors, providing necessary supplies, and delivering quality training for teachers, your gifts will help children reach their full potential and access better opportunities for the future.

\$15 provides school uniforms for orphans and vulnerable children

\$45 trains one girl in peace, gender and human rights so she has the knowledge and confidence to build a better future

\$210 provides one teacher with training to ensure a quality education

\$300 sends a child to school for one year





PWSSC06

Sunday School Challenge: Farming for the Future

Take part in the PWS&D Sunday School Challenge and help families have nourishing food for today and for years to come. Your support will provide families with seeds, supplies, and training in sustainable, organic farming practices that will increase crop yields, enrich diets and improve nutrition.

\$230 helps one family farm for the future

PWSBSL01

The Power of 50,000 ♦

There are many things people need in order to survive — including nutritious food, education, health care and a safe place to live. You can help 50,000 men, women and children break free from poverty by building sustainable livelihoods. Through your gifts, vulnerable adults and youth will receive vocational training, women will save and access small loans, and entire communities will prosper.

\$20 provides toiletries (soap and basic hygiene supplies) for children

\$58 supports a woman to join a savings group and access small loans

\$70 provides games and toys for students receiving school support

\$450 provides a sewing machine and cloth for a student learning tailoring

PWAGR01

Sowing the Seeds of Food Security

Subsistence farmers in developing countries work hard on small plots of land, struggling to provide food for their families. You can help farmers learn to improve crops, conserve resources and sell their goods – providing food for today and an income for the future.

- \$8** provides tools (wheelbarrows, hoes and shovels) for farmers
- \$25** provides seeds for a family garden plot
- \$57** buys fruit trees (avocado, peach, plum) for a family
- \$90** provides a goat to a young person living with HIV
- \$650** helps a vulnerable woman purchase a cow

PWMOM01

Starting Life Right*

In Malawi and Afghanistan, child and maternal mortality rates are among the highest in the world. Your gifts will empower women to take control of their reproductive health and ensure mothers and their babies receive necessary medical care to survive childbirth and lead healthy, abundant lives.

- \$40** provides a hospital maternity unit with labour and delivery supplies
- \$62** trains community leaders in girls' rights
- \$180** buys a bicycle for a community volunteer promoting maternal and child health
- \$490** supplies a delivery bed to a hospital maternity unit



PWEMRG01

Respond to Emergencies

Respond to disasters, war and persecution by providing immediate relief, emotional support and long-term rehabilitation for people in crisis.

\$45 ensures a family has soap and other essential hygiene items

\$135 supplies a family with an emergency food package, lasting one month

\$250 provides a shelter kit for a displaced family

PWH20

Fresh Water Renewal

Help a community access a sustainable water supply and proper sanitation facilities. Your gifts will help provide clean drinking water and training in hygiene practices to help prevent the spread of waterborne illnesses.

\$57 supplies a household with hand-washing facilities

\$285 trains community members about the importance of hand-washing and sanitation

\$595 installs a household latrine to promote better health

\$4,100 supplies a village with a rainwater tank





PWGIFT01

Make a bigger impact – give a gift together!

Join with others in your congregation to give a gift with a big impact! The power of giving together allows you to support the development of an entire community.

\$870 provides a women's self-help group with training ♦

\$1,180 provides a greenhouse for community seed propagation

\$4,100 supplies a village with a rainwater tank

\$7,650 supplies a health centre with medicine and supplies

♦ Donations made to items marked with ♦ receive matching funds from the Government of Canada.



International Ministries

sends mission personnel and supports leadership development, evangelism and innovative programs of church partners around the world. Find out more at presbyterian.ca/im.

IMIN03 *International Ministries - Train Nurse Midwives*

Train Nurse Midwives

The Mid India Board of Educators' nursing schools train nurse midwives in India to provide health care throughout the country and especially for isolated populations. Help train nurse midwives by equipping nursing practice labs with mannequins, books and teaching aids.

\$40 pays for six textbooks

\$100 buys a whiteboard and other teaching aids

\$600 provides one nursing educational mannequin

IMME01

Equip Christian Leaders in the Middle East

The Near East School of Theology, a Protestant seminary in Beirut, Lebanon, trains ministers and lay leaders from Lebanon, Iraq, Iran and Syria — some of the most dangerous places to live today. Students are earning Masters degrees in Christian Education, Theology and Divinity among others. Your gifts help keep a Christian witness in the turbulent Middle East.

\$250 pays for one course

\$400 provides textbooks for one year

\$850 pays for monthly room and board for a student

IMMA07

Bring Hope to Prisoners

Prisons in Malawi are overcrowded and underfunded, and prisoners suffer from related health problems and hunger. The daily meal of porridge has been reduced due to current extreme drought conditions. Some prisoners are at risk of starvation. Women, sometimes accompanied by their infants and toddlers, lack basic items such as soap, vaseline, medicine, hygiene products and food. Your gift allows prison chaplains to respond to these desperate circumstances. Besides basic items, weekly Bible studies and pastoral counseling offer inmates hope and dignity.

\$25 buys a Bible and hymnbook in Chichewa

\$50 provides soap, vaseline, basic medicine and food

\$250 provides transportation costs for weekly prison visits



IMTA01 (Taiwan); IMNI04 (Nigeria); IMMU01 (Mauritius)

Translate the Bible

Did you know that there are still some people who cannot read the Word of God in their own language? You can help with translation and printing costs so that people in Taiwan, Nigeria and Mauritius can read and understand the Bible in a language that speaks to their heart.

- \$25** helps print the New Testament in Creole (Mauritius)
- \$25** helps publish a Bible in Kori, Ntsobo/Isobo, Eziullo and Onicha (Nigeria)
- \$25** helps publish an Amis, Bunun, Drekey, Paiwan, Pinuyumayan or Tayal Bible (Taiwan)

IMEE01

Give the Gift of a Future in Eastern Europe

In communities where belief in God was discouraged for years, the Christian schools of the Reformed Church in Eastern Europe offer youth a quality education in a Christian environment. Help repair buildings and purchase updated equipment and school supplies for these schools.

- \$25** buses a Roma child to kindergarten or elementary school for one month
- \$200** provides food for one semester for a secondary school student
- \$500** funds special school projects





Canadian Ministries

equips and supports congregations and ministries in Canada. Find out more at presbyterian.ca/cm.

CM24

Ministries with Aboriginal Peoples

The PCC partners with First Nations communities through eight different ministries in Kenora, Winnipeg, Mistawasis, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Vancouver, Duncan and the Cariboo region of B.C. These ministries provide a range of services including sanctuary, hospitality and fellowship over a meal, spiritual counseling, housing, arts and crafts programs, worship, healing circles and cultural renewal.

\$40

provides day care for one day

\$50

supports counseling and parenting classes

\$100

buys musical instruments and/or art material

\$150

buys books and supplies for a secondary school student

CM31

Offer Sanctuary and Hospitality to Refugees

Assist people who have fled persecution and violence in conflict regions of the world. Support Action Réfugiés Montréal as they help refugees rebuild their lives in Canada.

- \$25** buys telephone cards for 5 refugees in detention
- \$50** builds community by connecting refugees in a Twinning Program
- \$100** provides visits to the immigration detention centre for one month
- \$200** helps sponsor a refugee

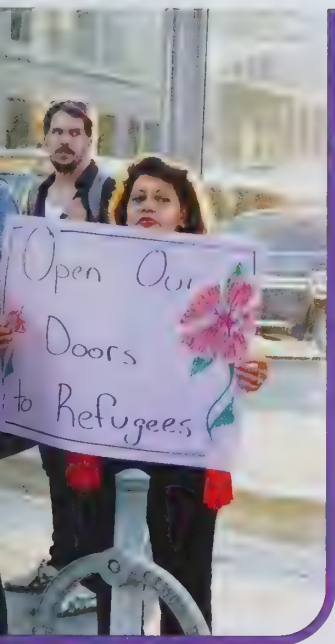


CM41

Support Congregational Ministry

Encourage the work of smaller congregations in rural and remote areas and those reaching out to ethnic-specific communities in urban areas. Support ministries of hospitality, Christian education, pastoral counselling, outreach and worship.

- \$25** provides supplies for ESL classes
- \$75** buys supplies for Christian education programs
- \$100** helps run home-visiting programs for people who are housebound
- \$150** provides pulpit supply for one Sunday



CM38

Bring Hope to Families Living in the Inner City

People in the inner cities of urban Canada face many challenges. Help provide at-risk families with after-school and skill-building programs, summer camp, tutoring, recreational facilities and the opportunity to build healthy relationships and self-esteem.

\$15

buys transit tickets for a child to attend programs for one week

\$50

provides healthy snacks for a child in an after-school program for a month

\$100

helps provide employment training to people who are new or distanced from the workforce

CM40

Give Hope to Vulnerable Women and Girls

Help empower victims of sex trafficking and those involved in the sex trade. Support ARISE Ministry as it journeys with women and girls who want to leave the sex trade and achieve their dreams and goals.

\$25

pays for phone calls to family members

\$65

buys clothes for a job or school interview

\$100

pays for groceries

\$150

buys books and supplies for a community college program

CM42

Encourage Children's and Youth Ministries

In Jesus' life and ministry he valued children and youth, and urged the community to welcome and nurture their faith. Young people have lots to say and ask about God. Children and youth ministries provide opportunities to build relationships and grow in faith.

\$25

provides supplies for youth programs

\$75

helps send a youth to summer camp

\$100

helps cover the cost for leadership at a youth event

\$150

helps create children and youth ministry resources

All the items in this gift catalogue are part of the bigger picture of hope and change that is happening around the world through The Presbyterian Church in Canada and our partners.

3 Ways to Give



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Presbyterian World Service & Development is the PCC's international development and relief agency. PWS&D raises funds directly from congregations and individuals – over and above gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing*.



Our mission, in a world of many nations, peoples, denominations and faiths, is to learn from one another and work together for the healing of the nations.

Focus

Stories of mission, ministry and community



INTERVIEW

Calling Leaders

Finding the best, and urging them forward.

by RICHARD TOPPING

WILL WILLIMON is one of the two most frequently read pastors in mainline Protestantism. Baylor University identified him as one of the 12 most effective preachers in the English-speaking world in 1996. His books have sold over a million copies. He is a bishop in the United Methodist Church and served in this office for seven years in the Northern Alabama Conference.

Willimon is a friend of the Vancouver School of Theology and frequently visits the school to give lectures, sermons and courses. He has an amazing ministry of encouragement to the clergy, the church and principals of theological colleges—he serves on the principal's advisory team at VST. I asked him recently if he would reflect on a series of important questions about theological education, the Christian church in North America and hope for the future. —Richard Topping >

INTERVIEW, continued

RICHARD TOPPING: What characteristics do the most transformative leaders in congregations have in common?

WILL WILLIMON: Leadership is what pastors do and is among the most important services a pastor can render to a church. Many pastors do not conceive of themselves as leaders. In fact, they are very suspicious of that language and I would say that they perceive of themselves mostly as caregivers, those who provide support and encouragement at best, as well as those who periodically deliver the Word.

My judgement is we do a fairly good job, when we're at our best, in theological education. What we're failing at is to say: "You're here to be a leader." Every Christian has a responsibility to have a theology, to evangelize, and to serve in the name of Jesus. So just saying that is important is a beginning.

In terms of qualities of a transformative leader, I'd say having self-awareness is required and particularly at this time. You used the words "transformative leadership." Maybe I'm being unfair, but we're being forced to talk about matters that our predecessors didn't talk about 50 years ago. Transformative leadership wasn't needed—the church did not perceive its need at that time. The need is really new and pressing and urgent because of the churches we serve.

TOPPING: In your work as a bishop or in your work as a theological educator, how do we get to these people?

WILLIMON: We ought to do a better job of identifying people who have gifts for leadership and calling them forward. When's the last time you have pulled aside the most talented young person in your church youth group and said: "Hey kid, you can get into medical school if that's all you want to do. You can make a bunch of money in business. But we think, with a lot of hard work and study, you could be one of our leaders." As a teenager, people

pulled me aside and said: "Hey, I think you would make a great preacher and I tell you what, I'd love to have you as our preacher someday." That's a healthy church. And so part of recruiting begins with that and part of that begins in seminary.

How did you get to be a pastor? I guarantee somebody said to you: "Richard, the way God calls people to do things for God is usually through other people. Now I want to talk to you." That's the way we get good leaders. You pick out somebody from your congregation that you'd like to be led by.

TOPPING: Have you ever seen the other sort of difficulty, that is to say, people who feel called to lead change, people whom God has obviously gifted but who look at the kinds of opportunities that present themselves in churches that want caretaking ministry and they wonder whether their energy for big things is best spent there?

WILLIMON: That's an issue for this particular generation (20- or 30-somethings). Many of them don't seem to have the kind of dogged persistence that is required to change anything. Back in the '60s, I remember interminable meetings that went on for hours where everybody got to speak but there was a sense that we're not going to change the system unless we sit here and do our homework. The job does seem to be overwhelming and indomitable. However, we've got a God who loves to raise the dead and who is determined to have a people against all odds. As President Obama said, "the thing that allows racism and racist structures to continue in America today is the evil notion that people can't change and the evil notion that no progress can be made."

We've got a God who loves to redeem stuff. One thing that helps is you keep at it ... [with] the theological conviction that God means to reign and that God

is not going to be defeated by a lethargic church. You've got to feel that this is change I want to do, this is a place I want to fight the battles.

TOPPING: You've done some writing and thinking about whether it's always the best decision to send promising graduates to established congregations who have a history of two or three people coming and staying a short time and moving on, discouraged.

WILLIMON: I was in one church who had a young, dynamic pastor who was really pushing them and I said that I had been so inspired by what's happening in this church, and that I can just feel the living Christ moving here and moving you. I want to meet all the people who served on the selection committee and tell them that they have done some good work. Your young pastor is impressive but he isn't as impressive as the people who chose to make him their pastor.

When I became bishop, one of the most important books I read was a business book: *First Break All the Rules* by Marcus Buckingham. It was a book for middle managers. One of the first rules that needs breaking is: "Treat everybody the same." Buckingham says that is a means whereby we preserve mediocrity in institutions. You have a sacred obligation to identify talent, to get to know that talent and to empower that talent.

You need to discipline yourself not to be dragged down by people who are failing. It is important to spend time with your best people. Who do you reward with your time, with your best pastoral appointments? Because those signals are going to be taken and we need to encourage those that need encouraging. +

Rev. Dr. Richard Topping is principal of Vancouver School of Theology. An extended version of this interview can be found at: willwillimon.wordpress.com.



Alex MacLeod

VIEWPOINT

Being Present

Turn to see the voice calling you. *by* LIZ HONEYFORD AND ALEX MACLEOD

THE THEME for this year's Renewal Fellowship annual general meeting was Practical Renewal. What do you do and how do you keep your faith active and alive? Interestingly, the two speakers—Liz Honeyford from St. Paul's, Leaskdale, Ont., and Rev. Alex MacLeod from Kortright, Guelph, Ont.—interpreted the idea of "practical" as prayer and sabbath.

Think on that for a moment—a practical renewal of your life and faith is to a) not work, and b) pray.

Honeyford opened by saying: "We need to look at the prayer life of Jesus because his Spirit is reproducing the interior life of Christ in us. We are being formed, transformed, in and by all things, into the very nature of Jesus Christ."

MacLeod began with: "I want to suggest that the most practical way you can be renewed in your life and in your congregation is to not work. You want renewal? You need rest."

The following are excerpts from >

VIEWPOINT, continued



Liz Honeyford

their two separate talks. I've edited them into a dialogue of sorts because their ideas echo the same themes.
—Andrew Faiz

ALEX MACLEOD: I find myself telling people how busy I am all the time. We don't realize how often we do this. It's a sickness—I'm crazy busy. It's partly a complaint and partly a boast. Does it impress anyone? The truth is that we're busy because we've chosen to be busy and due to a kind of disorder in our lives. We have not made it our priority to love God and to love people—notably, our families, our church family, and our friends.

LIZ HONEYFORD: I think Jean Vanier says it best when he says: "More and more people are becoming conscious that our God is not just a powerful Lord telling us to obey or be punished. Our God is family. Our God is three

persons in love with each other. Our God is communion."

Henri Nouwen once said: "I had to come to the realization that my entire life depended upon my willingness to re-enter the womb of our Mother God and find my home there."

MACLEOD: The idea of sabbath comes from God as creator. In Genesis we read that "God saw everything that He had made, and it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all the work that He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that He had done in creation."

For six days, God worked at creating

everything in the universe and then rested on the seventh day. God didn't need to take a break. Why did He do it? Well, God also didn't need to make creation happen in stages. He could have done it all at once. But God gives us a natural order, a pattern for our benefit. God's resting seems to have more to do with celebrating the completion of creation and enjoying its goodness than recovering from the work.

HONEYFORD: I think the evangelical world has some repenting to do around a teaching about living for Jesus ... or the What Would Jesus Do mindset. It is not the gospel; and it is not indicative of the interior life of Christ. WWJD is the wrong question. The right question is, What *Is* Jesus Doing? What is God doing right now that I can let the Spirit who dwells in me, who is present and active, do on earth as is done in Heaven?

Right here. Right now.

We don't live for Jesus. Jesus lives in us and he lives out his own life in and through us as we surrender. So, Jesus in John 5 says: "I only do what I see the Father doing."

MACLEOD: Through sabbath, we take the time to focus on our redeemer, Jesus Christ, and we do that together by gathering for public worship. Every worship service includes the range of our responses to God: we pray together, we study God's word, we praise God, we confess our sins, we are sent out to serve God. Above all, we are quiet and we listen to God who says: be still and know that I am God.

1 Thessalonians 4:11 says, "make it your business to lead a quiet life." It means strive to be quiet; work hard to rest; be ambitious for peace. It's an invitation to listen.

HONEYFORD: In Revelation 1:10, John of Patmos writes: “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day and I heard behind me a loud voice.” And then in verse 12: “I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me.”

I turned to see the voice.

Jesus lived in such close proximity, in his interior life, to the Father that he could see what the Father was doing, and become the hands and feet and voice of the moment.

John is in the Spirit, which actually has a double meaning: It means he was present in his own spirit and present in the Spirit. It’s what we call a kairotic moment. Kairos time: God’s space and time.

Prayer is a kairotic moment. It is a moment that I become awake and aware to the ever present One who is right here in the moment.

MACLEOD: As you consider how you could practice the sabbath in your life, I want to propose five priorities:

1. *Participate in Christian community and make Sunday worship a weekly commitment—that’s the basic sabbath act.*
2. *Stop working on your sabbath (whether it’s Sunday or another day)—for you that might mean not checking your phone, not going on a computer, not doing housework or shopping.*
3. *Enjoy recreation (something as simple as going for a walk, going skating, playing a game with your son or daughter).*
4. *Enjoy devotion (read your Bible, pray, pursue Christian education).*
5. *Serve others (practice hospitality, reach out to someone in need, give a gift or offer encouragement).*

God didn’t need to take a break. Why did He do it? God’s resting seems to have more to do with celebrating the completion of creation than recovering from the work.

Study to be quiet. In the quiet, we learn to pray.

HONEYFORD: Someone said recently that we live in a culture where we are in a state of continual partial attentiveness. And it is this partial attentiveness that robs each of us of being fully present. Present in my spirit. And present to the Spirit of God who resides in me.

Jesus was present to the presence of the Father continually. Without interruption. How is that possible for me?

For me, it’s about two things: Position and presence.

Is it possible to live in such a way that I can be so tuned in to the voice of my Father that I could continually turn to see the voice?

Yes. I am created for that kind of living and intimacy.

But there is going to have to be a relinquishment of unnecessary work and worry—the tyranny of the urgent. I’m going to have to let the Spirit get at some deeper issues in my life around identity and how my identity got formed by the wounds and the insecurities of others around me.

One of the practical things I do and have others do as we begin to teach present moment awareness is to take something like hand washing—something we do five to 10 times a day. And in that moment, deliberately slow


down. Feel the water. Feel your feet on the floor. Linger in the moment. Just for a moment.

Take a breath until your heartbeat has slowed down.

And ask, what am I feeling right now?

That’s harder than it sounds for most of us. What am I feeling right now?

And then turn to see the voice. That’s a simple practice of positioning.

MACLEOD: A couple of years ago, our clerk of session suggested that we stop in the middle of our session meetings for an hour of prayer. That’s crazy, we thought. We’re busy. But then we tried it—and it was very good; it was better. In recent years, our staff team at Kortright has chosen various theme psalms. At our weekly meeting, we read the psalm slowly. Right now, we’re soaking up Psalm 90. “Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” We go around the circle and take our time to read it, and it slows us down and opens us up to God. And so we hear God’s call—He makes His purpose clear. That’s sabbath, too. 

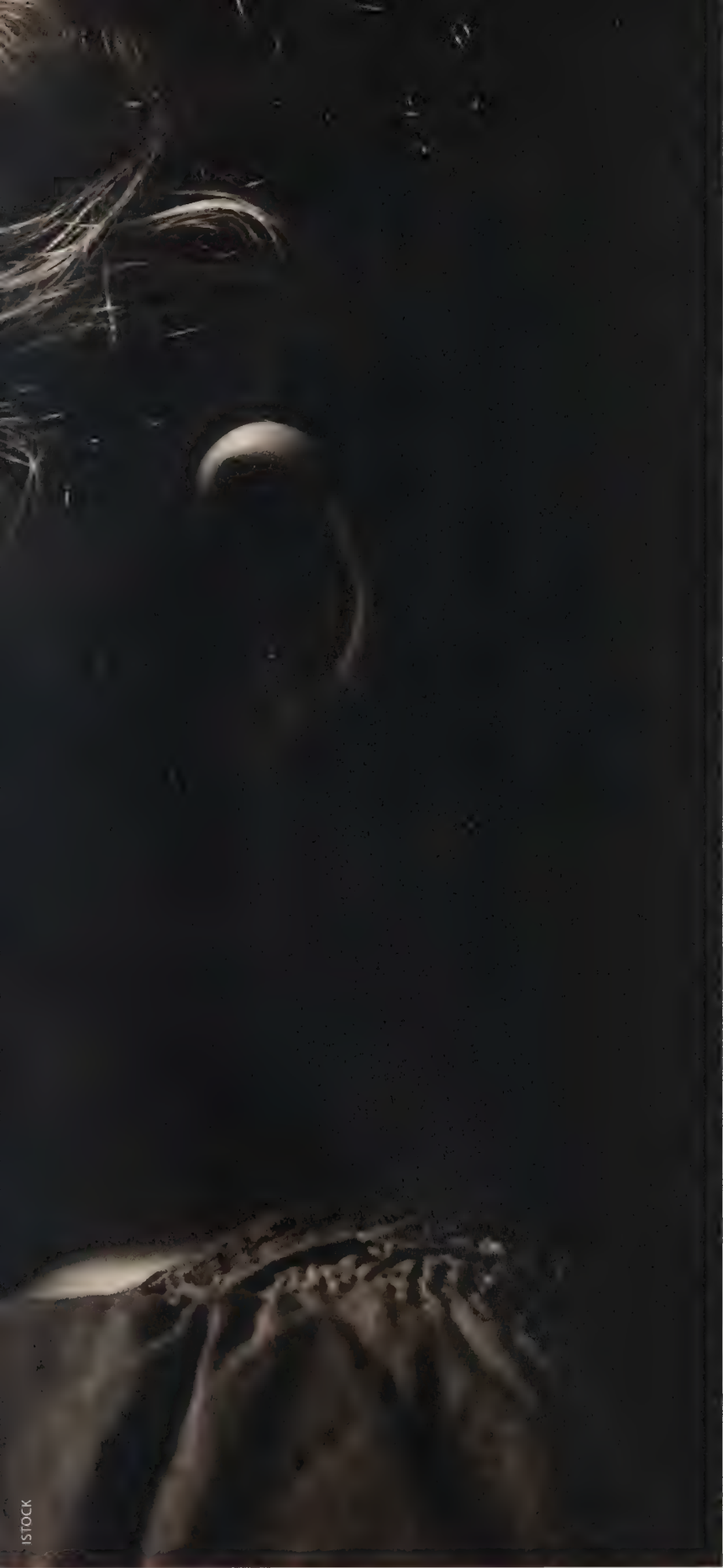
Rev. Alex MacLeod recently celebrated his 20th anniversary in ministry. He is senior pastor at Kortright, Guelph, Ont. Liz Honeyford is associate pastor at St. Paul’s, Leaskdale, Ont.



FEATURE

Intergenerational Worship

What to do when the kids are few. **by TORI SMIT**



“Hi, I’M THE SUNDAY

SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT at Knox Church and I’m wondering if you can help us. We only have six children in our church, and we’re struggling to make the Sunday school work. Could you please recommend a curriculum that would work for a Sunday school with just a handful of children?”

I am asked this question on a weekly basis as the regional minister for faith formation with the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda. It’s a good question and I’m happy to answer it, but I often wish I was being asked the deeper and more concerning question that lies behind the query about curriculum. I’d rather be working with churches considering the question, “What is the best we could be doing for the lifelong faith formation of our children given our circumstances?” This question invites a much different answer.

In this synod, 50 per cent of our congregations have 10 or fewer children and, as these congregations are discovering, doing Sunday school the way we’ve always done it is neither working nor viable. Maintaining a Sunday school is expensive, labour intensive, and most importantly it’s not changing the decades-long pattern of children >

leaving the church when their Sunday school days are done. Yet we persist in believing that having a traditional Sunday school is critical in the overall plan for the faith formation of our children; we're certain that the Sunday school is the singular indicator of good Christian education practice, as well as congregational health and vitality.

If not the Sunday school, then what? I believe our present circumstances offer us an opportunity to rediscover more biblically-based, intergenerational practices for the faith formation of our children that involve the whole community. Our faith is communally constructed, and as such it takes the whole community of faith, in meaningful relationship with one another, to pass faith on from one generation to the next.

In working with the congregations of my synod I've come to identify a number of best practices for churches to consider as they seek to provide the best they can for the faith formation of their youngest members. Each of these practices maximizes the opportunity for congregational members to establish long-term, trusted relationships with the children of their church as they experience Jesus through worship, ritual, and participation in the life and ministry of the church. These practices are as true for congregations with large numbers of children as they are for congregations with few children, but for congregations with just a handful of children they refocus their energy and resources into practices that are better suited to their circumstances.

1 Provide meaningful participation in intergenerational worship

AS A CHURCH WE BELIEVE that worship is the most central practice that we engage in as a community of faith. If our children are to truly participate in the life of the Christian community, they must also be a vital part of this central practice. When we welcome our children fully into worship, our community of faith is complete. Together in worship all ages learn of and experience God through each other, as we embrace the joy and openness of younger participants while benefiting from the lifelong experience of those who have been worshipping over the decades.

The church has worked for the last 50 years or



so under the assumption that a degree of cognitive learning is necessary as a prerequisite to participation in worship for children. But it's not knowledge that qualifies us for meaningful participation in worship; it's our openness to our experience of God that defines us as a worshipping community. Recent neuropsychological research has determined children are innately spiritual beings and experience the transcendent in their lives from early infancy. Children have an incredible capacity to experience the mystery and wonder of God and it's in worship that this mystery unfolds through the rituals of the sacraments and sharing of the stories of God's activity through scripture and our world. By delaying children's participation in worship until "the time is right," we prevent children from experiencing the wonder of God right now through worship.

Worship does not need to be dumbed down in order to include children or become carnival-like, featuring balloons and shallow platitudes. Nor should adult-focused worship simply be tweaked a little bit here and there in the hope of making it slightly more child-friendly for younger participants. Intergenerational worship needs to be prepared with all ages in mind. Each aspect of the worship liturgy must include words and concepts applicable for all ages, and all ages have a need for worship to become more experiential and participatory, appealing to all of the senses at the same time, enabling the family of God to touch, see, smell, hear and taste that the Lord is good.

2 Consider new models for church school

AS CHURCHES INVITE ALL AGES to be present in worship each Sunday, or increase the length of time or the number of days per year children are present in worship, the question of how they then might continue to provide age-appropriate, cognitive teaching for children is being answered through a broad variety of new and exciting programs. Some interesting and successful models for alternative forms of children's education I've experienced include:

1. Switching to broadly graded or intergenerational curriculum.
2. Offering additional materials and instruction for children to use in worship to further engage with the service.
3. Dedicated space reserved at the front of the church for young children to quietly work on activities related to the sermon and then offer their work as their response to the message that day.
4. Online Sunday schools that encourage parents and children to learn together at home at a time of their choosing.
5. Mid-week children's and intergenerational programming that replaces the traditional Sunday school hour and has the added bonus of attracting children who do not regularly attend your church on Sundays.
6. Seasonal children's educational events on Saturdays that entail the same number of teaching hours in one day that their Sunday school used over a number of Sundays.
7. Family-based educational events that encourage all ages to learn together over seasons of the church year or themes.
8. Intergenerational small groups that replace gender and age-segregated small group ministry.
9. Some churches are now offering a grandparent-led Sunday school for their adult children and grandchildren on Sunday evenings.

None of these models of education is the perfect one for every church. Each was developed as the best that that church could offer to meet the specific needs and availabilities of their membership, and each is open to revision and/or replacement as their families' needs change.


3 Support and equip parents for the unique role they have in the faith formation of their children

FOR CHURCHES WITH FEW CHILDREN, helping parents embrace their role as the primary nurturer of their children's faith is perhaps the most significant practice they can take

on. Parents are the first and primary face of God that children experience and parents continue to be the ones that their children look to for faith answers. Parents understand this, but often feel lost trying to figure out how to do it.

As churches polished and perfected the Sunday school model through the 1950s and '60s, they inadvertently let parents know that the church could take on the primary role of their children's spiritual development. Over time our parents have lost the art of sharing their faith at home with their children through the stories, rituals, conversations and modelling of Christian living that children learned from in previous generations. Churches need to re-teach parents how to pass along their faith at home. Through parenting courses, workshops, intergenerational events, preaching and mentoring opportunities the church can help our parents reclaim their role as the primary spiritual nurturers of their children.

There are other practices our churches might want to consider as they seek to share their faith with children in the church. Programs and lessons on issues of justice and social action offer the opportunity for all ages to live out and practice their faith together. Learning how to tell our own stories of faith as a part of God's big story helps children hear and know God through those they love and adopt their own faith through the experiences of those they love.

Being "intentionally intergenerational" is the ideological thread that runs through all of the practices. Intergenerational ministry calls everyone in the church to live out being the body of Christ with each other and the community in which we live. Being intergenerational is more aligned with the scriptures and the early church, and capitalizes on the natural multi-generational quality of a congregation. Faith is not formed in a bubble, but through our interactions and practice of our faith with one another in worship, study, social action, casual conversation and as we wonder together about God and our relationship with God and with the world. If churches choose age-segregation over intergenerational activities, then the opportunity for children and youth to rub shoulders with the many ages present in their community of faith is greatly reduced and the opportunity to learn from each other is lost. Children need sustained relationships with adults whom they trust and with whom they share similar beliefs and values as they consider their faith together; with this knowledge, congregations must create ample opportunities for such relationships to flourish. 

Dr. Tori Smit is a diaconal minister and serves as the regional minister for faith formation for the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda.



IT WAS THE SUMMER OF 2007. Deb Rapport was in between her second and third year of seminary and was spending the time interning at the Evergreen Centre for Street Youth, part of Yonge Street Mission in downtown Toronto.

On her first full day in the drop-in centre, she was shadowing one of the full-time staff.

"He told me we'd spend the majority of our afternoon taking care of a girl who came in regularly," Rapport told me one day in her tiny office in East Toronto. "When she did, she was really high; I remember she wasn't wearing

any shoes so the soles of her feet were black. Her hair was partly shaved and partly matted. And she was sort of going through the symptoms of being high. She had a hoodie on and it would fly open and we would see scars on her arms from drug use and self-harm. We were trying to get her to calm down and eat something and drink something—she was on a painful high, hallucinating and going through painful things. She'd go back and forth between apologizing and saying she's not used to being like this, that she's not normally like this, and then yelling at anyone who looked at her the wrong way.

"She wanted a joint. She said it would help her eat and sleep and calm down. And she was yelling at people as they passed by on Yonge Street. So the cops came and took her away. The whole thing went down pretty traumatically—the way they dealt with it, etc. That was right in Evergreen. We were trying to talk to them and say to them we can give support and help her. But they cornered her, and it was very traumatic for her.

"The staff person who was there is a dear friend and mentor still. So when we re-grouped and he shared her story, I learned she and I were the same age. I kept thinking of the things I was doing at the age when her mother's pimp began exploiting her. At that age, I was unaware of anything negative in this world, and was surrounded by such love and had a happy, bubbly childhood, and she was going through those horrific, horrific things. And I couldn't deal with it. It just broke my heart. I needed to do something about it, and needed God to do something about it."

That "something" was ARISE Ministry (whose tagline, "Hope lives here" couldn't be more perfectly said). It was started in 2013, with Rev. Deb Rapport as its sole staff person. Located near Regent Park, an oft-troubled area in the east end of downtown Toronto, and supported by volunteers, the Presbytery of East Toronto, and Canadian Ministries, it is a place where Rapport meets with sex workers who need various sorts of help and support, or who want to leave the sex trade and don't know where to start.

"I had a lot of conversations with the staff at Evergreen. And they wanted to do something, too," said Rapport. "How do we respond in a more meaningful way to individuals involved in the sex trade? And from that conversation we laid the groundwork for ARISE."

I HAD MY FIRST REAL introduction to ARISE on a chilly night last November. I met Deb at the Salvation Army building where her office is located, before heading out on her weekly midnight walkabout. These nighttime walks consist of Deb and one or two others walking a usual path of about five kilometres, chatting with women they meet and asking if they're okay. Slung over our shoulders are stuffed-full backpacks, heavy with the "pretty bags" volunteers help pack two or three times a year. The bags are filled with

things a woman might need or want during a long night on the street—hand sanitizer, tissues, lip gloss, condoms, hair elastics and bobby pins, tampons, gum, chocolate and emergency numbers. (And this time we also happen to have some gloves to give away.)

"It might be the only nice thing they receive all week," said Deb, noting that the bags are given in a spirit of complete non-judgment. Evangelism is not the goal.

On the night of our walk, the streets were mostly quiet. Deb told me with the weather changing, many of the women move indoors. I was wearing two layers, plus gloves and a toque, but the chill still wiggled its way along my neck and down my spine.

"There is an urge to rush in and save. We have to trust the saving to God. All we can do is be present and actively wait."

EVENTUALLY we started to see more women out—dressed in significantly less clothing than I was—and I watched many of these women greet Deb with smiles and hugs; a familiar face on a cold and lonely night. Often we stood and chatted for 10 minutes, listening to stories about their kids, discussing the day's headlines, or making mental notes of supplies needed (including one request by a transwoman for winter coats and high heels in large sizes). I recall one person—slight

and meek and new to the area from where we guessed was Montreal—who was trying on her new identity as a woman. She asked us if her look was convincing, seemed relieved when we said yes, and then thanked us profusely for the supplies we offered. It was hard to walk away. I, in my utter ignorance, wanted to put my arm around her and bring her to a coffee shop, finding just the right words to persuade her into another line of work.

"That is the hardest part," Deb told me later in an email. "There is an urge to rush in and save. We have to trust the saving to God. All we can do is be present and actively wait. We believe in reclaiming through empowerment rather than rescue, by this I mean we build the relationship, providing the support, tools, help and encouragement to help those we journey with to reclaim their lives and be heroes in their own story. Christian discipleship prepares us to walk with hope, to pray without ceasing, and live in the already-but-not-yet of God's kingdom."

Three hours later, at the end of our walk, the streets of downtown Toronto seemed anything but God's kingdom. I felt like someone had punched me in the stomach. Even ▶

**“I was easily
preyed upon.
I didn’t know
Toronto.
When I moved
into my building,
a lot of predators
were willing to
give you drugs.”**

on a quiet night, I had seen enough—particularly as we walked by several strip clubs on Yonge Street—to tell my husband the next day that I was convinced of the total depravity of the male species (sorry, guys).

I have since come to my senses, of course, but ARISE has left its mark.

AS IT CERTAINLY HAS ON DEB RAPPORT. Her fierce commitment to the women she serves (and the dizzying amount of knowledge she possesses of the business and life of the street) is key to earning the trust that can lead to real change. One young woman, who prefers to use her pen name, Angel, met Rapport several years ago at Evergreen and has continued meeting with her since. I met with both women one afternoon in March. Angel was friendly and articulate and ready to share her story.

When we spoke, she had just turned 30, but had seen and been through more than most people face in a lifetime: an abusive childhood thanks to a predatory father, teenage drug use, out of school at 15 and in an abusive relationship at 18, and life as a stripper before she even hit 20. Angel’s life seemed, for a time, hopeless. Originally from a small town up north, she came to Toronto to escape the life she was living. Ironically, when she finally managed to find housing (after a stay in a women’s shelter), her troubles worsened.

“I was really vulnerable,” Angel told me. “I was easily preyed upon. I didn’t know Toronto. When I moved into my building, a lot of predators were willing

ARISE 101 What happens during daylight hours.

So what exactly does ARISE do?

Well, in addition to midnight walks and passing out pretty bags filled with needed supplies, they offer one-on-one counselling designed to help women who need practical support (due to abusive boyfriends and pimps, addiction, struggles with landlords or Children’s Aid, finding safe housing, etc.), and to heal and regain a sense of power and purpose.

“I ask them, ‘What’s your earliest memory of, what do I want to do when I grow up?’” said Rev. Deb Rapport, founding director of ARISE. “It gets them thinking—what were my dreams when anything was possible? And sometimes people don’t have a clear

sense, so we talk about strengths. And as the conversation happens week to week, it becomes clearer.”

Preparing for employment and defining and setting goals are a large part of the counselling process, as is coaching around mental health and overall wellbeing.

“Just checking in and having someone else see your progress and the good you’ve done is helpful,” said Rapport’s client and friend, Angel.

“We work on all-around self-esteem, anger management, and self worth,” said Rapport. “We also talk about guilt and how to process some of that guilt.”

“Being able to talk about that stuff was really helpful,” said Angel.

“Having someone there and that consistency—someone you can reach out to and talk to. There are not many people you can confide in, there’s so much shame, you don’t even want to admit half the stuff. But Deb doesn’t look at you any differently. That’s huge.”

ARISE also has a partnership with a local martial arts academy, where groups of women who come to ARISE can go for self-defense training.

And it’s not only the women who learn

“When people are acting in very dehumanizing ways to people who are involved in the sex trade—whether that’s a bad date and they are treated

to give you drugs. They'd say things like, 'Come with me, we can make a lot of money together.' I knew one person through the strip club back home. I thought people would leave me alone if I stayed with him. But he pressured me to get into the sex trade, to do drugs. He blackmailed me and I was trafficked."

Run-ins with the police that left her feeling more victimized than helped made life seem even more desperate. (Rapport has numerous suggestions for desperately needed improvements to our justice and corrections system, but that's another story.)

Eventually, Angel wound up unconscious on the street, badly injured by the man who shuttled her from place to place, and with nowhere safe to go. Somewhat providentially, her case was finally assigned to a detective who believed in her and wanted to help.

"He actually cared and gave his time. He went above and beyond. Right through to the end he was competent and compassionate. He took me seriously.


"And [the trafficker] was prosecuted and convicted. He had been let off for many things before me. I was the

one who held this guy accountable."

ANGEL KNOWS HOW crucial Rapport and ARISE have been to her healing journey. She plans on returning to school, has received victim compensation for the things she's been through, has a safe place to live, has published a book of poetry, and regained her sense of self and purpose. She also connects with her mother on a regular basis—someone who Angel calls a "light in the darkness."

"I could always find that light and go back to that. I could rejuvenate my soul. She's a huge blessing, and I'm so lucky to have her."

Angel now wants to be a role model to other women in her situation; someone they can turn to when they have no one else, and to help them get out of life on the streets.

"There's a lot of wisdom to be learned; there's also so much negative—you think you have to numb it or it can haunt you. But I've come through it, and I'm unbreakable. I've not been defeated. There's still hope." 

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's managing editor.

in really horrible ways, or a drunk college student thinking it's okay to grind up against someone because she's on the street. Both are discouraging and frustrating to me in quite different ways. Both of those make me really angry," said Rapport.

"I guess the reverse of that—what's encouraging or hopeful, beyond just helping someone get out and see hope in their own lives—is seeing when men are having conversations with other men about this. It's great for me to have conversations with churches, etc., but when I know that other men, and particularly young men, are going and talking to their friends about this, are saying this isn't right and speaking out

about this, that's encouraging and gives me hope for the future. It's been really great to have this partnership with the martial arts academy, and how supportive they've been. That's really been a part of a culture that they're trying to teach and present and go forward with. That's an encouraging thing for me."

How can congregations support ARISE?

First, donate! Funds to support the ministry are always welcome.


Second, volunteer to pack the pretty bags, or donate items to be used in the bags. (Contact Deb Rapport to find out specifics if you're thinking of going this route.)

Third, volunteer to go along on a neighbourhood walk. It is an eye-opening, exhausting experience, where you will learn a lot and will want to share what you now know.

Fourth, consider accompanying clients to court hearings. "Court support is huge," said Rapport. "There's such a need, and sometimes I can't be in court for all the cases."

Fifth, invite Rapport to speak to your congregation or group.

Sixth, pray! Both Rapport and her clients are grateful for being remembered in your individual and corporate prayers.

Finally, if you feel called to work in outreach and counselling, ARISE is hiring! Visit ariseministry.wordpress.com to find out more.  —AM





Affirmenza

Cultural
Christianity
has ruined
the church.

by **ROSS LOCKHART**

illustration by **BARRY FALLS**

An older woman

LINGERED AFTER SHAKING HANDS one Sunday at church. “Hi there, thanks for worshipping today. I’m not sure I’ve had the pleasure of meeting you before,” I said. “Oh, I’m just visiting. I used to be a member here years ago but I moved to a different city.”

“Welcome back,” I said cheerfully, “what was it like worshipping again in this place?”

“Oh, just fine, thank you,” she said casually. “I do miss the days of Rev. (insert Christendom-loving minister with an ‘old country’ accent here) when the church was full.” I nodded and she continued, “Oh, how I loved his preaching. He used to tell the best fireside stories each Sunday without mentioning the Bible—and he got away with it! Isn’t that wonderful?” she said with a cackle.

I was momentarily speechless. “No, I don’t think that’s wonderful. In fact, I feel sorry for you. You were cheated out of an experience of the life-changing gospel.”

She frowned and walked away.

IN A POST-CHRISTENDOM NORTH AMERICA, Christ followers encounter people of no expressed belief and all kinds of different beliefs every day. The interactions we have with others as apologists can range from angry atheists to the affable agnostics to the amiable apathetic folks whose Sunday ritual includes visiting Starbucks and reading *The New York Times* religiously.

Today, however, we also deal with a number of “cultural Christians”—many of whom were raised in an era when to be a good citizen and to be a good Christian went hand in hand. These are the kind of folks who introduce you to their witty, secular friends and then say in a hushed tone, “they would be a good and generous church member; you should tell them about what the church can do to meet their needs.” These are the folks who arm twist their clergy and churches into accepting a domestication of transcendence, and feel free to be Marcion-like playing “cut and paste” with the scriptures, until they have a gospel gutted of obedience to Christ and missing God’s call to transform the world—beginning with us. It does not take long to link this unholy Trinity of “me, myself, and I” in the church to the dominant culture of affluence and consumerism all around our places of worship. (Marcion? Google him.)

Rather than understanding the church as the sent people of God, as missionary disciples who are deployed to bless and mend God's broken world as witnesses to resurrection power, too often we have encouraged and enabled an entitlement mentality regarding membership in the church. This lingering postwar, 1950s model of membership church that existed primarily to meet the needs of those consumers in the pews rather than those outside the walls of the church, is an ongoing obstacle to missional practice in the mainline church. This membership model all too often "outsources its baptismal vows" to paid clergy and feels that showing up through "noses and nickels" is all that is required. For some, church simply becomes a performance they attend. If it no longer suits their personal desires, then they move on to another performance. In the movement from a parish-based approach to church to the commuter model or "voluntary society," people pass many mission communities on their way to a "church of their choice" each week.

This "consumerist" model of Christianity certainly mirrors the consumerist culture of North America where people use their freedom to flow easily from one service provider or product to another based on their personal preference or the most desirable price. What could be better than a low-cost (to you), high-attraction church for many people? The freedom to move between churches based on personal preference has become an assumed fact of Christian lifestyle in North America today.

THE ART OF NEIGHBORING, a wonderful book by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon, is a helpful addition to missional literature. To test one's engagement with their neighbours, the authors developed a chart to help move the Great Commandment from a theory into a real-world context by having people identify eight "neighbours" around their home or apartment. The first step is simple. Can you write the names of the people who live in the homes around you? Even writing first names only is acceptable. The

second step is to write down relevant information about the people who live in the eight homes around you that you could not tell by simply seeing them in the driveway or apartment hallway.

For example, write down where they are from and what kind of work they do. Third, write down in-depth information that might include a sense of their dreams and goals and purpose for life. Based on your conversations with them, what do they believe and according to what values do they live their lives? In sharing this exercise with church people, Pathak and Runyon have discovered that about 10 per cent of people can fill out the names of all eight neighbours, three per cent can fill out the second question for everyone and only one per cent can fill out the deeper third question for each home.

This "consumerist" model of Christianity certainly mirrors the consumerist culture of North America where people use their freedom to flow easily from one service provider or product to another based on their personal preference or the most desirable price.

TWO LOCAL MISSION COMMUNITIES helped me recently understand what it looks like to be a people gathered around worship, witness and work. University Presbyterian in Seattle is known for its effective and faithful ministry in the Pacific Northwest. Several years ago, the elders of the congregation felt God calling them to plant a new mission community. They were called to purchase a warehouse in the South Lake Union neighbourhood of Seattle. Urban planners in the congregation told the session that

this was the next up-and-coming neighbourhood in the city.

The church commissioned its well-loved youth and young adult ministers, James B. and Renee Notkin, to minister in that community. The Notkins established a coffee shop and set to work on building relationships in the community. Like the Apostle Paul, James B. had a varied skill set that included business and theology. His tent-making skills helped establish a thriving coffee shop in one-third of the building and a gathering space for worship, witness and work in the remaining two-thirds of the space.

In time, the urban planners were proved right as Amazon established its world headquarters in South Lake Union—and the place came alive. Soon "Union Church" as it was called became

the hottest non-profit space in a growing neighbourhood of young executives living in loft apartments or shiny new condo towers. James B. varies the Sunday gathering with a mix of worship, witness and work. Some Sundays, people gather for an uplifting worship service of praise. Other Sundays, a brief worship turns into a Bible study with small groups where people do the heavy lifting of scripture together. Still other Sundays, a brief worship is followed by an invitation for disciples to sign up for one of several activities of service in the community that morning—everything from cleaning up trash to making sandwiches at the local homeless shelter to visiting in a nearby nursing home. James B. has told me that several people have come into a relationship with Christ who were suspicious of Christians but came at first on the Sundays where they could serve in the community. We've adopted this format for our own chapel services where I teach at the University of British Columbia. Missional worship terrifies and electrifies students and faculty alike as we go forth from St. Andrew's Hall to serve and witness to God's glory on campus.

Another mission community that has encouraged me lately is St. Peter's Fireside, Vancouver. A new mission community, it is an outreach in the downtown to so many who live in the skyscraper condos, yet who describe isolation from neighbours as one of the biggest obstacles to urban living. In fact, Vancouver is home to an incredible number of church plants—missional leaders who are trying to figure out what God is up to in a community with so many pre-Christians that presenting the gospel here feels a lot like standing on Mars Hill with Paul in Acts 17. The mission community uses excellent online tools to engage with their young, wired congregation. Participation in a mission community like this leaves no room for spectators or those who have settled for consumerist religion with its "outsourcing of baptismal vows" to paid clergy. Spending time in mission communities like Union Church or St. Peter's Fireside makes me hopeful and excited for what the Holy Spirit is doing in our midst.

Perhaps the most exciting part of these new and renewed mission communities emerging in our

post-Christendom context is that there is less and less room for folks who want to observe the "Sunday show" or take out the membership but never exercise on the ecclesiastical elliptical machine or the sanctified spin bike.

IN A CULTURE OF AFFLUENCE there will always be a seductive pull towards the unholy worship of me, myself, and I. For those daring enough to respond to God's call and serve as missional leaders, advice from the Old Testament like "gird your loins" comes to mind. Missional leaders are sent into a culture of affluence to speak up and speak out against the demonizing lure of self-worship with joyful praise of the Triune God. Missional leadership confesses, "I'm (not) sorry" as it stirs up Christian apologetics (defense of the faith) for apologetic Christians, who are sent forth to counter the consumerist mindset with a confession of faith in the living God. This proclamation, however, is not of the doom and gloom variety. No, we proclaim God's grace and goodness against

the powers and principalities of this world knowing that in the cross of Christ, God's victory has already been achieved over sin and death. Our turn from self-worship (which ultimately ends in self-loathing) to the genuine praise of the Triune God is a movement full of joy and thanksgiving.

Missional leadership reminds us, by grace, both who and whose we are. As the old revivalist preacher Charles Spurgeon once said in his sermon "All of Grace": "A child of God should be a visible Beatitude, for joy and happiness, and a living Doxology, for gratitude and adoration." Therefore, missional leadership is by its very nature doxological, inviting us with joyful hearts to proclaim:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. +

This is an excerpt from Lessons from Laodicea: Missional Leadership in a Culture of Affluence. Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart is director of Presbyterian formation at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver.



FROM THE MODERATOR

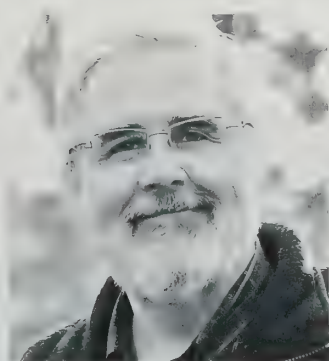
Look to the East

Korean Christians are 'all in.' *by* DOUGLAS ROLLWAGE

I HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF the Presbyterian Church in Canada since the mid-1980s. While the congregation I joined was healthy and sound, many that I visited as a student minister and guest speaker were already in sharp decline. Our national program of “doubling in the ‘80s” was devolving into staunching the losses. In short, I have not experienced the age when the PCC was in a position of fiscal or numerical strength.

My recent visit to the 101st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea was, as a result, quite an eye-opener. One of the students in my entourage was a member of a congregation of more than 100,000 members—larger numerically than the entire PCC. There are several Presbyterian churches with membership over 20,000, many over 10,000. Still, the majority of Korean Presbyterians worship not in these mega-churches, but in medium-size 500 to 800 member congregations, and many more in small storefront or second-story aid-receiving churches of 60 to 100 people. These numbers add up; there are about three million members in more than 8,000 congregations within the PCK, which is only one of three major Presbyterian denominations in Korea. The total number of Protestant Christians in Korea is over 15 million, plus upwards of six million Roman Catholic Christians. On any Sunday, about a third of all Koreans are in church.

What is truly astonishing is that in 1880, there wasn't a single Protestant church in Korea. The Roman Catholic Church had established a foothold, but




Still, the majority of Korean Presbyterians worship not in these mega-churches, but in medium-size 500 to 800 member congregations, and many more in small storefront or second-story aid-receiving churches of 60 to 100 people.

murderous persecution from the traditionalist ruling families kept numbers low and believers underground, despite incredible courage and fortitude. Then, in 1884, Protestant missionaries Horace Allen, Henry Appenzeller and Horace Underwood arrived. They were soon joined by Canadian missionaries R.A. Hardie, O.R. Avison and J.S. Gale.

Thanks to the sacrificial efforts of these and other faithful men and women, the gospel would not only take hold, but in the course of a single century would utterly transform Korean society and establish a bright future for the church.

Despite persecution from the established order, the privations of the Japanese Occupation, the brutality of the Korean War, and the division into North and South Korea, the church, in the short span of a single century, grew to the astonishing size it is today. The church's dedication to God and commitment to service bore tremendous fruit. Korean Christians were, in the modern phrase, “all in.”

This fills me with hope. We have a mission, a purpose, a job to do. We don't have to settle for decline. We Canadian Presbyterians possess an infrastructure unknown to the early Korean church. We have wonderful buildings, theological schools, freedom of worship, rapid communication, unlimited access to scripture. We live in a society that needs to be brought into relationship with God through Jesus Christ no less than the Korea of 1880.

What we need is a renewal of commitment. What we need is renewed dedication. We can and must decide, as individuals, as congregations, as a denomination, to go “all in” for Jesus Christ. If we do—when we do—we will join our Korean brothers and sisters in bringing our nation to God. 

Rev. Douglas Rollwage is minister at Zion, Charlottetown.

People & Places

Find more online at presbyterianrecord.ca

Photographs can be uploaded at presbyterianrecord.ca.



ST. ANDREW'S, SACKVILLE, N.B.

There was a lot to celebrate at St. Andrew's on Sept. 18. The small congregation dedicated a vertical platform lift to make their church accessible to people with limited mobility. It was funded through a grant from the Presbytery of New Brunswick, a gift left to the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and sacrificial giving by the congregation's members. Pictured here are Anne Miller, treasurer, Art Miller, board chair, Pauline Atkinson, and Rev. Jeffrey Murray.



KNOX, GEORGETOWN, ONT.

Three birthday girls were celebrated at Knox: Lillian Clayton, Elma Harlow and Connie van Goch. Elma is the eldest member of the congregation with 97 years of life behind her; she's been singing in the choir for 80 of them. Together with Rev. Steve Boose, who also sings, these four have spent a combined 167 years as part of the choir.



ST. ANDREW'S, MAPLE, ONT.

St. Andrew's hosted a "Talk and Tour" with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Women's Association. Following a tour of the church, Rev. Robert Royal led a presentation on Christianity and the Presbyterian Church in Canada. According to him and Shamaila Bajwah, outreach team member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community: "We have much in common—love for God and each other."

THE OTHER SIX DAYS

Another Other Six Days

And more food for thought. *by* **BRADLEY CHILDS**

THE OTHER “THE OTHER SIX DAYS”

The Other Six Days is a workplace-focused ministry developed by Sidney Hinton and based out of North Carolina. The website encourages professionals to make Christ visible in the workplace. So what does that mean? Well, basically, it's a daily devotional. But it's also a whole lot more. It encourages members to take seriously a mission to their place of business. To join, you first sign a covenant declaring your desire to proclaim Christ daily. Then you sign up for a daily email. Each devotion (titled Make Today Count) comes with a specific task or challenge for the day which is directly related to a passage of scripture. Sometimes it's as simple as “pray for your boss” or “buy a co-worker lunch” and other times it might be a little harder like “do part of someone else's work load” or “shower praise upon the person most commonly criticized for their work.” Sundays are fine after all, but they don't mean that much if we're not bringing the church out into the world “The Other Six Days” of the week.

FIND IT @ theother6days.com

A BIG SHAKE UP

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship is a ministry whose stated purpose is to “establish and advance at colleges and universities witnessing communities of students and faculty who follow Jesus as Saviour and Lord.” They are present at more than 600 colleges and universities, providing tools and training for evangelism. They also have a mission around the world and a respectable publishing arm that has included such

authors as John Stott and Francis August Schaeffer. And they have 1,730 paid staff. So why bring them up? Well, something very big just happened: InterVarsity has required all employees to affirm a 20-page document on hu-

It encourages members to take seriously a mission to their place of business.

To join, you first sign a covenant declaring your desire to proclaim Christ daily. Then you sign up for a daily email.

man sexuality and compliance is required for continued employment. And this just in: the executive committee of the Society of Biblical Literature has banned all InterVarsity Press books from its bookshelf at its annual reading.

FIND IT @ intervarsity.org and [scribd.com/document/326684433/InterVarsity-Christian-Fellowship-Theology-of-Human-Sexuality-Paper](https://www.scribd.com/document/326684433/InterVarsity-Christian-Fellowship-Theology-of-Human-Sexuality-Paper)


NEW MUSIC

Dan Cummins. Dan Cummins. What to say? Oddly enough, I don't know anything about this guy. He's got no Wiki page. His Facebook page is basically nil. As far as I can tell, he put this whole album together himself and produced it at home. I don't think he's got a manager or

even a full band. It seems he plays cover music at parties. Yet he has two CDs—one being a new album called *Storm* that came out on Oct. 7 at a release party in North Carolina that was interrupted by an actual storm. I think it's fair to say that some of the production is less than perfect, and there's something odd about the vocal mixing in at least one of the songs. Other than that, I just have one thing to say about *Storm*: I like it. It's like Joe Satriani but in Slow Hand form with a bit of new-metal feel, if that makes any sense. Either way, I like it a lot. I'm listening to “Stardust” this very minute.

FIND IT @ youtube.com. Search for “Eye on Me - Dan Cummins - Storm.” thestormalbum.com

CRINGE-WORTHY

In 2012, at the Our Lady of Velan Kanni Catholic Church in Mumbai, India, a miracle was reported. Outside the church there is a large statue of Jesus. Water dripped from the tip of the crucified feet. Local Catholics declared these to be the tears of Jesus. The church suggested they were holy and many a visitor began to arrive to see the miracle or drink from the tears. And with that, India's leading skeptic and rationalist Sanal Edamaruku arrived to investigate. What he found? The water was run-off from a nearby toilet. For his “crimes” he was charged with blasphemy but escaped to Finland to avoid arrest. The water? Well, some still believe. 

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at Fairview, Vancouver.

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Ministry

Opportunities

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Miramichi (Chatham), N.B., Calvin; Black River Bridge, St. Paul's; Kouchibouquac, Knox; Full-time minister for a three-point charge; Interim Moderator Rev. Jeffrey M. Murray, 36 Bridge St., Sackville, NB E4L 3N7; 506-536-3311; revjeff@nb.sympatico.ca.

St. John's, Nfld., St. David's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Derek Krunys; 709-687-7742; stdavids.nf.ca.

Stanley, N.B., St. Peter's; seeking a full-time minister; Interim Moderator Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1M2; 507-455-8220; debbaikie@gmail.com.

Tabusintac, N.B., St. John's; New Jersey, Zion; and Bartibog Bridge, St. Matthew's; Full-time three-point charge; Interim Moderator Rev. J. Gillis Smith, 535 King George Hwy., Miramichi, NB E1V 1N2; rachmsmi@nbnet.nb.ca.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Beaconsfield, Que., Briarwood; Minister who is able to work with all ages, connect with young families, strong communicator and teacher of the Christian

faith; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries; 514-288-5256 extension 209; rdevries@presbyteriancollege.ca; profile at briarwoodpresbyterianchurch.ca. Pointe-Claire, Que., St. Columba by-the-Lake; Full-time minister able to relate the gospel to contemporary life and to foster a spirit of faith and compelling witness in an open, inclusive, dynamic community; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Kay Diviney; 514-842-3431; assocminister@standrewstpaul.com; see also stcolumba.ca.

Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

Caledon, Claude; Part-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Rebekah Mitchell, 44 Church St. E., Brampton, ON L6V 1G3; 647-969-5456; mitchrr@gmail.com; congregational profile available at claudechurch.com/ministry-opportunity.html.

Guelph, Duff's; seeking a forward-thinking, full-time minister to provide strong leadership, preach to the practicalities and encourage new forms of worship, music and ministry; Interim Moderator Rev. Bill Bynum, c/o Duff's Presbyterian Church, 319 Brock St. S., Guelph ON N1H 6H9; congregation's

profile available on church's website, the Ministry & Church Vocations website and from the Interim Moderator.

Scarborough, Melville; an established and vibrant congregation has an immediate opening for an organist/pianist/choir director; Chair Personnel Committee, c/o Melville Presbyterian Church, 70 Old Kingston Rd., Scarborough ON M1E 3J5; 416-283-7719 (fax); melville_church@bellnet.ca; copy of posting available through church office at 416-283-3703.

Toronto, Armour Heights; seeking two leaders—welcome individual as well as team applications and flexible to a part-time arrangement; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Nicholas Athanasiadis, 670 Eglinton Ave. E., Toronto ON M4G 2K4; 416-422-0510 ext. 23; nick@leasidepresbyterianchurch.ca; armourheights.org.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Chatham, First; Part-time director of music. Role supports one weekly church service on Sundays, a weekly choir practice as well as several additional services throughout the year. We are also willing to discuss

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES. continued

alternate arrangements whereby two individuals share the responsibilities for this role; for a complete job description or to submit an application contact Ed McLachlin by September 30, 2016, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 60 Fifth St., Chatham ON N7L 5V7; eamclachlin@gmail.com; firstchatham.org.

Innerkip, Innerkip; near Woodstock is a thriving congregation seeking an executive pastor who is a strategic thinker with the ability to lead, encourage and celebrate an extremely gifted staff of 8. Session is policy, vision oriented and committed to the historic living Gospel of Jesus Christ; for a job description please send your profile or resume to innpresb@execulink.com or stan.cox@sympatico.ca.

Owen Sound, St. Andrew's: Music director/organist, part-time position directing choir and accompanying on organ and piano; see full description standrewsowensound.org.

Simcoe, St. Paul's: Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Stanley Cox, 65 Tan Ave., Waterford. ON N0E 1Y0; 519-443-4798; stan.cox@sympatico.ca; sppc@kwic.com; visit website stpaulssimcoe.com.

Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

No vacancies submitted.

Synod of Saskatchewan

No vacancies submitted.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Calgary, Alta., Centennial; Interim Moderator Rev. Ena van Zoeren; 403-830-5662; enavanz@gmail.com.

Calgary, Alta., Varsity Acres; vacant since August 1, 2016;

Interim Moderator Rev. Kobus Genis; 403-999-3435; kobus@wpchurch.net.

Synod of British Columbia

Parksville, St. Columba; Seeking

a dynamic full-time minister of word and sacraments; Interim Moderator Rev. Jennifer Geddes; 250-218-5465; revjenng@gmail.com. 

Knox Presbyterian Church, Kincardine

is seeking an enthusiastic, energetic individual to serve as our **Director of Music**. Applicants must have an appreciation of the importance of music as a part of Christian Ministry, and an ability to work well with people of various ages and skill levels.

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For a complete list of duties and expectations please contact the Church Secretary at knoxkincardine@gmail.com with "Music Director" in the subject line or phone 519-396-2311.

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ARMOURHEIGHTS.ORG

FOR THE JOURNEY

Faith Lessons from a Duck Hunter

Life (and faith) need practice. *by* DAVID WEBBER

I STARTED DUCK HUNTING when I was about 14 years old. I hunted ducks and geese every spare moment I had, and some moments that I didn't have, until to everyone's surprise I finished high school and went to college.

Higher education, a couple of careers and a bout of city living put an end to most of my teenage fun. And then, one summer, just as we were leaving for summer vacation, my wife Linda unintentionally initiated events that would begin my second childhood. She bought me a hunting magazine for holiday reading. It stirred something deep within me. I read and reread each article throughout the holidays, especially those about hunting ducks and geese. Autumn came and I began to stare into space with glassy eyes.

The gospel according to hunting magazine had its full effect. I had something akin to a conversion experience. By December, I had talked Linda into buying the boys a "cute little chocolate lab pup" for a Christmas present. By the following summer I had bought the biggest magnum shotgun that our meagre preacher's budget could afford.

And then autumn hit with all its magic. I was moved. I had a near religious experience. I had a vision: Me, Gunner the lab, my magnum shotgun, a pond and waterfowl in the air. There was only one thing left to do ... only one thing I could do ... hunt ducks! I hadn't hunted waterfowl for 20 years. The thought that I had forgotten how, or had perhaps become a little rusty, never entered my head.

One early November morning found Linda, the boys, Gunner and I up at 3 a.m. It was going to be a family



affair. Lunch and supper were packed in the cooler. All of the gear was stuffed into the truck. I was hoarse from shouting refrains of: "Hurry up, dang it all!" Finally, we escaped the city on our pilgrimage. Three hours later the truck was parked a half-kilometre from Davis Pond. The pilgrimage had ended. The waterfowl hunt had begun.

I'm not sure why, but I have this incredible knack of purposefully gathering a crowd whenever I am about to make like a donkey's backside. On this fine morning, I could have left Linda

and the boys in the truck while I put the sneak on the pond. Nobody would have ever known what happened. Instead, I insisted that everyone join me in a gang sneak on the pond. I loaded my new magnum shotgun with heavy loads. I loaded Linda with the cooler. I loaded the boys each with a duffel bag full of duck decoys. Pulling my new camouflage cap down over my eyes, I initiated the sneak, my dutiful band of not so merry disciples trudging along behind me.

We made our way through the pine forest to the edge of the pond with me waving angry hand signals about every two seconds and staring daggers at my disciples for every blade of grass that rustled. I peered out from the forest to the pond. "Huh? Not one blasted crummy duck," I muttered under my breath.

And then I heard it. At first I didn't know what it was. Whatever it was, it was making a considerable racket, getting closer to us and coming down the pond. I knew I had heard the sound before but it was buried in my memory. I stepped >

Final Thoughts



FOR THE JOURNEY, continued

out onto the steep, slimy mud bank and peered down the length of the pond to where the water turned a corner out of sight. My memory speed shifted into gear about the same time a gaggle of Canada geese honked and turned the corner into my view. I knew what that old familiar sound was now. I smiled a sly smile and told Gunner to sit and stay. I crouched motionless on the slippery mud bank.

They kept coming, honking their heads off. Like a true professional from one of the hunting magazines, I let them fly right up to me. As they flew past I let my hunter's instinct take over. With confidence I stood up and threw the magnum shotgun to my shoulder. I pushed the safety off and touched off the trigger.

I'm not sure why it never occurred to me before, at least not in the way that it did right after I touched the trigger, but there is a healthy difference between a modern magnum shotgun filled with what must be nitro-glycerine and the mild, old antique shotguns of my youth. This difference is particularly noticeable when you don't have the shotgun properly mounted to your shoulder when you touch it off. The difference is amplified several times more when you lean back and try to stand on one leg while shooting geese from a steep slimy mud bank. After the cataclysmic explosion, after the shotgun came back and punched me stiffly on the jaw, after the lights went out and the sky filled with marvellous coloured stars, after I came to laying flat on my back in the icy mud; I think the fact that I had the presence of mind to enthusiastically yell, "Did I get one?!" spoke highly

of my personal character and the power and authenticity of my near religious reconversion to waterfowl hunting.

Linda didn't answer right away. She couldn't. She was doubled over in convulsive laughter behind a tree. Both boys were staring at me with eyes as big as plates. Davin, our oldest, was able to mutter, "Wow, Dad!" Gunner the lab looked at me with disgust and cocked his leg on a rosebush.

Finally Linda recovered enough to help me to my feet. "No, you didn't get one, dear," she gasped. "But I think you demonstrated a sound need for much more practice."

This all happened some 34 years ago when I was a newly minted Presbyterian minister, but the lesson has never been forgotten. In life and in waterfowl hunting, a very enthusiastic religious-type conversion experience is never enough. It takes practice. It takes diligence. As to faith, the Apostle put it to Timothy to: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15) It strikes me that too often today we Christians like to think that a vibrant faith just runs out of religious enthusiasm and experience like ice water off of a melting glacier. But it doesn't. A vibrant Christian faith has to be developed, to be cultured and grown. It takes practice, discipline and diligence around studying the word of God, in the discipline of prayer, in worship and devotion, in fellowship and service. Life—and faith—take practice. +

*Rev. David Webber, now retired,
lives in Lac La Hache, B.C.*



Once upon a time...

There was a girl who was full of potential.

She was a dreamer and she dreamed of changing the world and off into the big world she went, not knowing what she'd find.

She was seeking uncertain possibilities and against her mother's wishes she ventured through the world blind,

She was innocent, sweet and naive...

She was a predator's dream.

She didn't stand a chance; there were predators and temptations everywhere she glanced, each more charming and convincing than the last.

Finally, she'd live a life of slow, painful destruction, hating herself for making the same mistakes as the past.

This is what the devil wanted.

But God had major plans for the woman, like he does for all his children,

She had potential and was full of Good.

He refused to give up on her, and don't forget, she had a mother who never would.

Then she realized she was the only one who could fight the battle with the devil and save her soul.

It was useless if she was working with the bad to destroy herself, and self-sabotaging had taken its toll.

She needed to protect herself, cherish herself, forgive herself and even love herself.

She needed to fight this battle now; it wasn't up to anyone else.

So, she fought the devil and all of his obstacles, and she fought and she fought and she fought...

One battle at a time no matter who or what presented as a threat and she realized she wasn't as helpless as she'd thought.

God's power, the power of angels, as well as the unconditional love of her mother and her brother, and finally her own free will;

The power of choice and her choice to fight to live a good life all combined, were the ingredients it took to break the devil's spell.

She shared the cure with everyone she could find who was suffering spiritually.

Now, instead of more bad there is good, instead of more tears there is laughter,

And that's how

She lived...

Happily ever after.

—This is a condensed version of a poem from
The Darkness and the Light by Angel Power



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- Reimagining leadership to prepare our students to be caring and effective spiritual and community leaders today and tomorrow.

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"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

— JEREMIAH 29:11



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DECEMBER 2016



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FOR THE RECORD

Love is the Way

Enfleshed in Christ. *by* DAVID HARRIS

But God,
by definition,
needs nothing.
So the divine
love is most truly
selfless love.
God loves us,
not because of
need, but simply
because She
wants to.

“And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”

Dividing the Bible into chapters didn’t take place until around 1227; verses weren’t introduced until 1551. There are no such divisions in the original Hebrew and Greek scrolls.

Those divisions are a reading aid, but they sometimes obscure connections, too.

So at the end of what we call Chapter 12 of Paul’s first letter to the church in Corinth is a line that reads: “But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.” Paul then launches into his famous section on love.

Although it can’t be proven, I think Paul is using the word “way” in a double sense. Recall that Acts 9:2 says: “[Saul] asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”

Love is the way. Or, perhaps, we should say, Love is The Way. As John says: “God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.”

Our faith, then, is in a God of Love—love that became enfleshed in Jesus Christ. And while it is true that if we truly believe this we will try to live in a certain manner, that perspective is quite different from treating the Bible as a set of rules to be followed so that God will accept us.

Jesus consistently challenged the faith of the religious leaders of his day who treated scripture as a set of rules. On the contrary, he said, it’s about responding to God’s divine invitation to have an intimate

relationship with God.

It is that faith that gives us hope. Christian hope is not merely that the world will be a better place—though our faith requires us to redistribute wealth so that everyone can share equally in the riches God has provided for us on this planet and also to take care of the Earth.

Important though those are, our hope—our expectation—is that the Spirit is continually working in us and the world to accomplish the divine will.

And the divine will is that Love will triumph. This runs contrary to the world’s wisdom, which is either that nothing matters or that, if anything matters, we must follow a set of rules.

What is interesting and curious about love is that it depends on seeing how the beloved (the object of love) completes what is missing in the lover. Couples instinctively figure this out, finding a mate who completes them.

But God, by definition, needs nothing. So the divine love is most truly selfless love. God loves us, not because of need, but simply because She wants to.

So this is my—our—closing wish for you, dear reader. That this Christmas and every year after that you continue to draw breath, you will feel the love of God that surrounds you, and that you, in turn, will spread that love to everyone you encounter.

On behalf of everyone on the *Presbyterian Record* team: “God bless us, every one!” ☩

David Harris is the Record’s publisher and editor.

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Contributors



DAVID HARRIS spent nearly a decade studying philosophy and theology in three universities before finally settling on an obvious career in journalism. He has worked at daily newspapers in Halifax and Toronto and reported from Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Central America for several religion periodicals. His next career will become obvious soon.

DEBORAH LEADER has been the *Record's* circulation manager since 2005, "holding down the fort" while the editorial staff were off covering stories or working from coffee shops. She wants to offer her many thanks to the supporters of the *Record* who subscribed and donated over the years, breathing life into the old girl! [Her words!] Debb found joy in knowing and working with her dedicated and creative colleagues and wishes peace and good health to all.

P.S. If you know of anyone looking for a D.F.E. (darn fine employee), her resume is now available for the asking!



WIL MCGILVERY is the *Record's* webmaster ("geek") tending to the website and assisting with the posting of the monthly articles. One of his favourite columns is "The Other Six Days" full of offbeat but interesting news and information. If this wasn't enough then the Babylon Bee made a good substitute.

Letters

THANKS FOR WRITING TO US.

Say It Ain't So...

I am so very sorry to hear that the *Record* has needed to conclude its 140 years of publication because of declining readership and financial support. You have been my window on the Presbyterian world and beyond for over 50 years. I shall miss the thought- and heart-provoking articles and columns. I also appreciated that from time to time you gave me some room to try my wings at writing an article or two in your pages. You will feel the loss most keenly because your vocation and lives depended upon your work as editors and writers. I pray that some other avenue may come soon along for Presbyterian Record Inc. to continue its historic and significant ministries.

J. H. HANS KOUWENBERG, VIA EMAIL

It pains me to think this will be my last

letter to the editor of the *Record*. Never again via snail mail will I be addressing envelopes "care of 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto." What wonderful memories they were.

Down through the more than three decades I read the publication, rarely was there not an issue which didn't elicit interest, knowledge or wisdom and in some rare splendid moments the mirth of the saints. No one more than a writer of such letters appreciates a publisher who will actually publish what you submit. A cockney would say, "Good on you, mate!" I say, God bless you!

As a minister of word and sacraments for most of this time, I fought hard for the Every Home Plan; it gave members and adherents a view of the theological and news-making points of view of a far larger world outside our

doors; a view which was intelligent, educational and informed, often to the point where I'd have the *Record* in one hand and the Bible in the other when preaching. Everyone knew where I was coming from—and where I was going.

Ah, they were sweet times. Many a time, the arrival of the *Record* was the ray of light when the world seemed dark and foreboding. Always there was hope and a reminder of a "God who so loved the world He gave His only Son."

But nothing lasts forever and after 140 years everything is entitled to die, even a beloved and thought-provoking publication.

ROD LAMB, KEEWATIN, ONT.

I was saddened by the news that the *Presbyterian Record* is ceasing publication in December after 140 years. I feel this is a huge loss to our sense of

Pastor Sheep



www.pastorshep.ca

©Susan Mattinson

community in the national church. Aside from helping us to feel connected to the broader church, the articles were often inspiring and thought-provoking and provided insight and guidance. The staff and contributors have done a great job over the past years to keep the *Record* relevant, thoughtful, informative and interesting. I would like to commend them for their good work.

CAROL JACKSON, TORONTO, VIA EMAIL

I was extremely saddened to hear of the imminent demise of the *Presbyterian Record*. As a child growing up in both the U.S.A. and Canada, it was a fixture in our household. In later years, when my parents' mobility restricted their ability to go out to worship, it provided them with an important spiritual and emotional link to their Presbyterian community.

When they passed away I continued the subscription in their honour, to support the publication and because I had become attached to the thoughtful, observant and caring content.

I wish it didn't have to be, but I understand why. Thank you for all the many years that the *Presbyterian Record* has graced our homes and entered our hearts.

PAMELA RICHARDSON,
TORONTO, VIA EMAIL

How saddened we are at West Point Grey here in Vancouver and in other congregations, too, to hear that you plan to stop publishing the *Record* as a magazine in December. For a great

many of your readers, this has been by far the most meaningful way to keep the whole Presbyterian Church alive in our hearts and minds, since we have been able to read each issue so easily, and even after many months to refresh our memories on various stories.

As you will no doubt know, for us who are aging now, the ability to keep the contents of these significant articles alive in our minds has become very challenging, much to our chagrin.

May your gifted writers continue to bless our church with their outreach to readers of all generations online and in this precious magazine form as well.

CLARABETH MCINTOSH, VIA EMAIL

I am so sorry to hear that the *Record* is folding. For over 40 years I have read it from cover to cover and enjoyed it so much. You have many awards and rightly so. I wish you all success in your future.

JOYCE PEARSON, SCARBOROUGH, ONT.

As a regular reader and financial supporter of the *Presbyterian Record*, I am heartbroken that 140 years of Christian witness has come to this end.

I feel the new way forward is of a magnitude that the Presbyterian Church in Canada will have lost its face and its voice come the new year.

GORDON COYNE, WATERLOO, ONT.

Thank you for your wonderful work ➤



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First Thoughts

with the *Presbyterian Record*! I look forward to each edition and read it cover to cover, and I have a lot of difficulty parting with past copies. I was very disappointed to recently learn that the *Record* will cease publication after December. While I understand the decision, it is definitely a sad reality. I will certainly miss you! Thank you for all that you do. I wish you well.

CHERYL MCMASTER, COURTICE, ONT.

It is sad news that the *Record* is going to be discontinued; it is like losing a best friend. I have read the *Record* for many years, always starting with the editor's piece and reading right through to the end.

Almost every issue was challenging and interesting. A big thank you to David Harris, Andrew Faiz, Amy MacLachlan, Connie Wardle and many other contributors.

I will miss the monthly articles with a Christian perspective and the news about what is happening within the Presbyterian Church. I can only hope that maybe a new way can be found to let us know what God is doing in His Church and what Christian thinkers are writing.

TRUDY SMIT, GUELPH, ONT.

In September 2003 I changed both church and denomination. That week I visited the church secretary who kindly gave me several issues of the *Presbyterian Record*. Later that week I sent in my subscription.

As a non-Presbyterian Christian, the *Record* has enabled me to see Christianity through Presbyterian eyes. I appreciate the annual coverage of General Assembly and reading about the opportunities and challenges faced by congregations from coast to coast. Even the obituaries tell of

meaningful lives and the significant historical events they participated in.

As much as I enjoy my local church, the *Record* has connected me to the larger Presbyterian community. You will be missed.

BARRY R. BETZNER, HAMILTON, ONT.

I am sorry to hear that the *Presbyterian Record* will cease publication after December. Thank you for all your hard work providing balanced and thoughtful coverage of issues that matter.

JULIE VAN VEEN, LONDON, ONT.

A group of us from St. Andrew's, Saskatoon, were discussing that the *Presbyterian Record* will no longer be after this year. We are dismayed to lose such an outstanding publication.

As our denomination continues to shrink, the magazine has performed an important role in keeping us in touch nationally. It has been a wonderful forum for the exchange of ideas, and discussions of social issues, national and international, for theological discourse, and as a resource for groups across the country.

We especially want to tell the editor and staff that they have done a great job. Along with many contributors, they have produced a top-notch magazine and we are grateful to have had the best efforts of these superb people.

DONNA BAILEY, AMANDA CURRIE, DINEKE KRAAY, YOKA DEBRUIJN, MERLE MCGOWAN, MARINA ONCLIN, ARLINE SANDERSON, BERNICE SHIH AND MARGARET WILSON, SASKATOON, SASK.

I'm still in shock. I just read about your "death" moments ago in the newest *Faith Today* magazine. Your demise is a sad reflection on the state of magazines—even denominational magazines.

Maybe the PCC wants to buy it back

for a dollar and keep it going with some hard Presbyterians Sharing funds.

May you retire in style.

KEITH KNIGHT, VIA EMAIL

It is with regret and sadness that I anticipate receiving the final publication of our *Presbyterian Record*. Having served for several years as a director and convener, I witnessed and experienced the dedication, determination and professionalism of an exceptional staff. I am thankful for having had that rare privilege. You have my admiration and respect. I pray that you will have a happy and rewarding future wherever you are led.

In losing the *Record*, the Presbyterian Church in Canada has lost a unique voice and witness.

Thank you for your service.

FRED SPECKEEN, VIA EMAIL

We have received the *Presbyterian Record* for many years, both at the offices of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and the last several years at the office of the World Communion of Reformed Churches of which the PCC is a member. During those years we have also worked closely with the principal clerk of your General Assembly, Rev. Stephen Kendall. This note is to express our profound gratitude for the cordial relations we have enjoyed with many in the PCC over many years. Reading the *Presbyterian Record* kept us in touch even when face-to-face meetings were not as frequent. Thank you so very much for the courtesy you extended to us.

It is with regret that we take note of the ending of the *Record* as a monthly publication. We will miss that connection even as we understand the realities we all face in our changing environment. We wish for all of your staff,



Rachel, age 10, Knox, Waterloo, Ont.

and the PCC as a whole, the Lord's indispensable blessing.

REV. DR. PETER BORGDORFF
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EMERITUS,
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN
NORTH AMERICA

Thanks from Fort Mac

On behalf of Faith, Fort McMurray, Alta., I would like to pass on our appreciation and thank yous for the articles Andrew Faiz wrote about Faith Church and Fort McMurray in September and October.

We all enjoyed reading them and also enjoyed your visit as well.

Faith Church is back worshipping in the school (as of early September) but using the library, as the theatre is not quite ready for us.

Faith has offered the call to a minister from South Africa and it was approved by Edmonton-Lakeland presbytery, so now it's the waiting game with immigration.

All is still going well at Faith Church

and in Fort McMurray there is a great amount of rebuilding going on to have homes closed before winter sets in.

Do take care and thank you again for thinking about us.

BRENDA BREWER, FORT MCMURRAY,
VIA EMAIL

Time to Stop Running

A couple of years ago, an unexpected event gave me the opportunity to look at a specific area of my life: my sexuality and the choices I had made as a young woman. After the initial event subsided, I was able to recognize it as an opportunity because it was painful. A little too painful. The event had triggered me. According to the dictionary, a trigger is an act or event that serves as a stimulus and initiates or precipitates a reaction, or series of reactions.

When we are triggered we do not respond, we react.

The Lord had provided me with a warning sign that there was an area of

my life that I was running from. I was unable to effectively deal with the current event as it unfolded because no matter how hard I tried to be present, I couldn't be. I had been triggered.

Is this what is happening in the church as we explore this ultra-sensitive, traditionally unspoken area called sexuality? Are we engaging out of unexplored, perhaps unconfessed, brokenness that is driving us to reaction?

It strikes me that all the education, discussion, debate, or reading we do on any subject will be largely ineffective if we do not engage in the process of removing the log from our own eye. We cannot have God-honouring conversations if we are not coming from a place of humility. That is true of any subject. But because sexuality is an area that the church has traditionally shied away from, are we particularly reactive because of a sort of "cumulative running-away effect?" Have we spent far too much energy both personally, and as a church, running from a very important area of our experience?

God has designed us so beautifully. Our reactions can be an indication of where He wants to take us. If it's painful, then maybe that's an indication that He wants to meet you in your brokenness.

If it's painful, then maybe it's time to stop running.

NANCY BEATTIE, VIA EMAIL

Meet Us Online

Our employment ends December 1, but we'll stick around online until the end of the year. The *Record's* website—presbyterianrecord.ca—and Facebook pages will be active until December 31. Please add comments there.

Thank you for your kind words. You've had us in tears.

THE RECORD STAFF

POP CHRISTIANITY

Goodbye

I'll miss this. *by* ANDREW FAIZ

This column started in September 2003; I joined as staff in September 2004. On my first day I met Amy MacLachlan returning from her honeymoon. It was during Amy's first maternity leave that Connie Wardle joined us. Caroline Bishop, our art director, came on board in 2005. Deborah Leader, our circulation manager, also arrived a little over a decade ago.

With David Harris, editor and publisher, this has been the team, along with designer Salina Vanderhorn and web master Wil McGilvery, that has produced the magazine for the past 10 years. There was a hierarchy of sorts, we all had job titles that suggested various responsibilities, but we all participated on all levels of production—sourcing ideas, developing stories, writing, editing, copy editing.

Along the way there were two weddings—Caroline's and Connie's. And six children—Caroline's three, Amy's two, David's one. Plus, Connie is expecting in March. My own predated my tenure here by two years.

Caroline taught me the importance of the visual. She gave the magazine its look—its body, if you will. Incarnated. She gave physical presence to a steady stream of theological essays. Month after month I was moved by the worship she created with her art direction.

Weeks after Connie joined us I asked David to find extra money; we had to keep her. She was fresh from school and a preacher's kid—two obvious marks against her. But she's



I have been blessed to play with these kids in a really fun amusement park. I'm going to miss the daily engagement with them all. And I'm going to miss having this bully pulpit.

smart and a natural storyteller. Two of her pieces, which only appeared online, rank amongst my favourites of her work—her trip to Jordan and her Reformation tour (with wine!). Beautifully paced observations.

I will miss Amy—the editorial critiques, the passionate faith and wisdom. The magazine should have

moved away from the middle-aged male voice that has so dominated it, to hers, and Connie's and Caroline's; towards her vision of wider inclusivity and engagement with the pragmatic details of living a life of faith.

Deborah has been our quiet omnipresent centre. She's always in the office, holding it down. I long joked she wasn't allowed to take vacation because my flightiness would lose its anchor in her absence.

David found more money from fewer resources each year. He worked the fine details of contracts to extract the best values. He kept the magazine alive and gave us all—the day workers, and the columnists, and the church at large—an open playing field to tell stories and have conversations. Any success the *Record* has had in the past decade begins with his stewardship.

I have been blessed to play with these kids in a really fun amusement park. I'm going to miss the daily engagement with them all. I'm going to miss having this bully pulpit. And I'm going to miss hanging with all of you. There's at least a dozen of you I've never met but we've exchanged emails for years. I'll miss you.

There are a few things I won't miss; they have no place in this accounting. Remember, God is good and Jesus loves you. The rest is unimportant by comparison. ☩

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

BULLETIN

Community and World News



WOMEN'S ORDINATION

Past, Present & Future

Service celebrates 50th
year of women's ordination.

by **CONNIE WARDLE**

The idea bubbled up over a breakfast shared by women ministers in communities west of Toronto. Rev. Gale Macdonald was planning a service at her church, Clarkson Road in Mississauga, Ont., to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The other ministers soon got on board, and the resulting service proved to be more than any of them anticipated.

"God completely transformed it from what we imagined it would be," said Rev. Jacqui Foxall, minister at Knox, Oakville, Ont. "I felt called and sent through that service. It wasn't just, let's pat ourselves on the back and remember and give thanks. It was, right now lace up your boots, you have work to do and a legacy to participate in leaving."



The plans for the service were spurred in part by disappointment that this year's General Assembly didn't include a mention of the anniversary of women's ordination. It was on June 7, 1966, that the highest court of the church voted to allow women to be ordained both as elders and as ministers. The vote on opening the door to women ministers was conducted by secret ballot: 133 of the all-male commissioners voted in favour, with 72 opposing it.

Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon, who preached the sermon, started classes at Knox College in 1969. She now serves there as principal.

"We have to be careful we don't take this gift for granted and become complacent," she told the *Record*.

The worship service, which was held on Nov. 9 at Clarkson Road, drew participants from six area congregations, and attendees travelled from as far as Kingston, Ont. Worship leaders included a mass choir, seven ministers, the moderator of the Presbytery of Brampton, and several elders and laypeople. One prayer was led by three

generations of female elders from Trafalgar, Oakville. And the benediction was given by nine-year-old Claire Samwell, a member of Knox, Oakville, who feels she might be called to ministry.

Macdonald said one of the ministers who had a great impact on her faith journey had also sensed a call to ministry as a young girl, but in those days women couldn't be ordained.

Samwell "doesn't grow up with 'you can't do that because of your gender,'" Macdonald said. "For me that was the most poignant and powerful way to end the service."

Those leading the service expressed gratitude for the trailblazing women and men who worked hard to remove barriers for future generations. But the theme of continuing to look for those who are excluded, and to work for a better future, ran throughout.

"I think there's still a fair bit to do in church and society in terms of where women are at," Gordon said. "And that was what the sermon hoped to do—was to say, yes, when we have an anniversary we celebrate the past, we think about

what has been achieved, but we also have to look to see where we're being called to continue to act in the present."

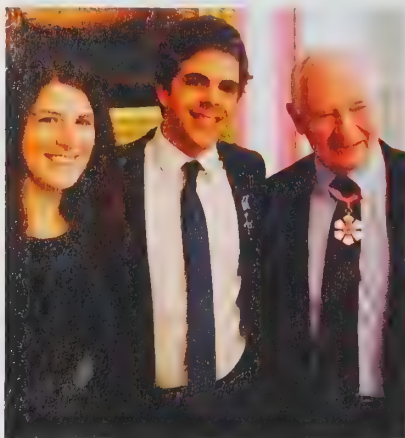
Women are active and visible in congregations and presbyteries, she suggested, but they're less visible or their voices tend to be muted in higher courts and leadership positions.

Even at the congregational level there's work to be done, Foxall said, especially when it comes to assumptions about motherhood affecting a woman's fitness for ministry.

She recalled being asked by a member if she was done having children or if she could be an effective minister if her children got sick—questions rarely if ever asked of ministers who are fathers.

Gordon concluded her sermon with Dorothee Söllee's paraphrase of Augustine of Hippo: Hope has two lovely daughters; their names are Anger and Courage, she said. "Anger so that what cannot be, may not be, and courage so that what must be, will be." +

Connie Wardle is the Record's senior writer.



A MEMBER OF KNOX SPADINA, TORONTO, received the Meritorious Service Cross from Governor General David Johnston at Rideau Hall in November for his dedication to giving children in developing countries

access to education.

Tom Affleck has grown SchoolBOX, his grassroots NGO, from a struggling start-up to an organization that has built more than 80 classrooms in Nicaragua, serving thousands of students.

At just 38 years old, Affleck now pours his energy and Christian values into his new job as entrepreneurial leader at Knox. There he oversees the Missions Hub, an incubator for Christian charities, and a \$10 million renewal of the downtown church's property to ensure it remains a long-term force for good in its community. Affleck's wife, Sarah Kerr now looks after SchoolBOX as its executive director.

"This is a very humbling honour," said Affleck. "We started SchoolBOX with a

dream and little else. We've now built 82 classrooms, employ a full-time construction crew in Nicaragua, and help more than 17,000 kids a year receive an education with school supplies and libraries."

In 2018, SchoolBOX will begin a new initiative called SchoolBOX Canada, which aims to empower Indigenous youth in northern communities to create libraries and other educational resources in their schools.

The M.S.C. honour recognizes an activity that has been performed in an outstandingly professional manner, or with uncommonly high standards; the activity is often innovative, sets an example for others to follow, and improves the quality of life of a community. + —with files from SchoolBOX

SPONSORSHIP

The CHOSYN one

A miracle baby in St. John's. *by* **ANDREW FAIZ**

HASSEN AL HUSSEIN, born on Nov. 6, is a miracle child whose birth has knitted together two churches, a mosque, dozens of local volunteers and caregivers, and a medical staff that defied the odds.

Hassen's family—parents, Mostafa and Bahijeh, and his two older brothers, Mohammed (6) and Yassine (5)—arrived in Canada in February from a refugee camp in Lebanon. They were originally from Aleppo, Syria. They were sponsored by a joint effort between St. Andrew's and St. David's congregations in St. John's, Nfld.

Rev. Derek Krunys, minister at St. Andrew's and interim moderator at St. David's, arrived in Newfoundland last September. He hit the ground running with St. Andrew's as they got their application in to sponsor a refugee family by late November 2015.

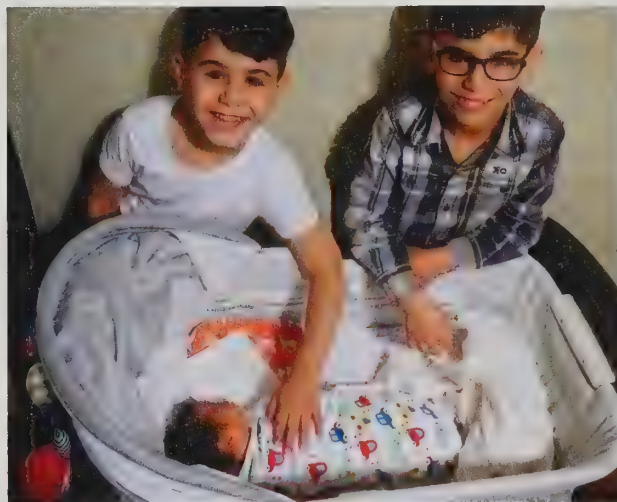
The two congregations founded Churches Helping Our Syrian Neighbours. Krunys admits the acronym—CHOSYN—is a bit misleading since it reflects only the two congregations but “how could we resist something so catchy?”

CHOSYN knew early on that the al Hussein family was designated as having a health concern; however, only a week before their arrival did they learn the mother, Bahijeh, needed regular dialysis treatments due to a kidney problem. She was receiving dialysis in Beirut twice a week, just enough to survive. CHOSYN found the right mix of people with the medical skills to navigate the extra needs of the family.

Bahijeh would have been placed on a kidney transplant list but almost immediately upon arriving in Canada she got pregnant. She needed to be transported to her treatments—each dialysis session can take four hours—six times a week.

Baby Hassen is only the second child to be born to a woman undergoing dialysis in St. John's. The American National Kidney Foundation advises against pregnancy until after a kidney transplant. The CHOSYN community, along with others in St. John's, provided a support group for the family to allow a miracle child to be born.

The father, Mostafa, was a shoemaker in Aleppo. Bahijeh, a homemaker. They spoke no English and have little formal education. St. Andrew's and St. David's partnered with the local mosque to provide translation help. Bahijeh found herself in the odd position of learning how to read Arabic



while at the same time learning English.

Eager to start work as soon as he landed, Mostafa was advised to improve his language skills first. He started with a part-time building maintenance position which has the potential to become full-time as his skills develop.

Krunys said the congregations and the local community have become involved in the life of the al Hussein family to the point where they intend to continue supporting the family past their legal obligation of one year. CHOSYN will direct the family to social and educational programs and will help in any other way. Bahijeh's medical bills alone can cost up to \$1,000 per month.

Krunys has noticed that the two congregations have developed deeper relationships with each other and with the local Arabic community through this sponsorship experience. “As we hear our call, it is amazing what else can happen,” he said.

The two boys—Mohammed and Yassine—have also developed friendships through school. Their new English skills allowed them to exclaim to a team member who had moved to Halifax but came back to visit in November: “We speak English good now.” 🍀

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.

Towards a World Without AIDS

A journey from despair to hope. *by* KAREN PLATER

"I hear there are drugs that can help me live. Can you help?"

The woman was thin, her face drawn. We sat in a small dark room in a house in the urban slums of Blantyre, Malawi.

I still remember the despair of not having an answer. It was 1999. The medications she needed to treat her HIV existed. Back home, my husband John, a hemophiliac with HIV, was living an almost normal life because of triple combination anti-retroviral drug therapy. The \$1,000 a month we paid was covered by health insurance. But this treatment was completely inaccessible in Malawi.

It would be another three years before the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria was founded and another few years after that before access to treatment became a real possibility for the people our Presbyterian partners in Malawi were working with.

In 1999, the Presbyterian Church's AIDS work focused mostly on education. Though AIDS had been around for more than a decade, the church—in both Canada and Africa—wasn't talking about it much. International Ministries staff Dr. Rick Allen was working as a community health advisor to the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya, helping them dispel their myths and misconceptions. Presbyterian World Service & Development supported some education programs in Malawi that focused on the prevention message of ABC: Abstain, Be Faithful or use a Condom—with a lot of emphasis on A and B.

The situation grew worse. By 2004, everyone in Malawi knew someone

affected by HIV. They were attending funerals and caring for orphans. I remember sitting with Esther Lupafya, a community health nurse at Ekwendeni Hospital, as she cried because she felt so helpless to respond to the overwhelming need.

It was in response to calls from our many international partners that the PCC launched the Towards a World Without AIDS campaign at the 2004 General Assembly. A church-wide effort was made to raise funds and awareness about the global pandemic and the campaign became the focus of Rev. Dr. Richard Fee's moderatorial year. Within a year the initial goal of \$500,000 was almost reached and within four years the campaign had raised over \$1.5 million.

Dr. Rick Allen helped the Presbyterian Church of East Africa launch a "trainer of trainers" program which equipped ministers and members to confront stigma and discrimination and provide accurate information about AIDS. The PCEA passed what today is still a model of one of the most progressive denominational AIDS policies.

Partners in Malawi greatly expanded their education and prevention programs, and both there and in other countries, the work began to address the forces that lead to transmission, including poverty, disempowerment of women, stigma and discrimination.

By 2009 the tide was turning as a result of a massive global effort that included co-operation between the United Nations, government and non-government organizations and faith-based organizations. A multipronged approach of providing

anti-retroviral drugs, home-based care, and agriculture, food security and feeding programs achieved lower death rates. Ekwendeni Hospital's mother-to-child prevention program saw rates of mothers passing the virus on to their babies drop from 30 per cent to under one per cent.

When we launched the Towards a World Without AIDS campaign, the challenges were overwhelming. But the theme reflected our faith in a God who would one day overcome death with life.

Today, UNAIDS has launched an equally ambitious vision: Zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. The United Nations' high-level meeting on ending AIDS held last June adopted a new political declaration to fast-track progress toward combating HIV and AIDS. The declaration includes a set of time-bound targets over the next five years and a goal to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

With such progress, we could think that the fight is over, but there is still much to do before we reach a world without AIDS. PWS&D's AIDS programs around the world continue to provide practical support and our collaboration with ecumenical and inter-faith partners through the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance is helping keep AIDS on the global agenda, fight stigma and discrimination, and advocate for access to treatment for all. If we stop HIV work now, the numbers will once again begin to rise. The vision is within sight, but the fight continues. +

Karen Plater is associate secretary of Stewardship and Planned Giving.

Faith.

Deepening your relationship with God

KALEIDOSCOPICALLY

Goodbye is Hard

The holy work of letting go.

by KATIE MUNNIK

THE SPOUSE HAD PROMISED really good curry, but told me to eat a sandwich first.

"The speeches will be long," he said. "We probably won't see dinner until after 9 p.m."

As a lecturer with broad interests, the Spouse is invited to all sorts of events. This time, it was an interfaith dinner at city hall and partners were included. The theme of the evening was "Faith in the Future" and the speakers were Sarah Joseph and Karen Armstrong.

Sarah Joseph is a British writer and broadcaster who converted to Islam as a teenager and focuses her work on Islam, women's rights and interfaith questions. Karen Armstrong refers to herself as "a runaway nun." She has written over 20 books exploring the Abrahamic religions, theologies and histories as well as memoir and biography. From both speakers, I think I expected to hear about something historical, perhaps >



KALEIDOSCOPICALLY, continued

concerning the underpinnings of our contemporary situation. Instead, the evening was a call to action.

Karen Armstrong spoke about compassion—not soft-bellied, sentimental love, but active engagement with the world. I was struck by Armstrong's strong assertion that all faith traditions share the golden rule. Compassion is the common thread—and it is more important today than ever before.

"I am convinced that unless now we learn to implement the golden rule globally and ensure that in whatever walk of life we find ourselves that all peoples—whoever they are and whether we like them or not—are treated as we would wish to be treated ourselves, the world is not going to be a viable place."

The world can be a weary place and Armstrong assured us that we are at our best when we let it disturb us. She spoke of "dethroning yourself from the centre of your world." We should respond to our own pain by helping others. We should deal with uncertainty by reaching out.

Sarah Joseph's focus was religious literacy. She gently argued that in our multicultural and mingling society, there is no excuse for a lack of curiosity about those around us. But this isn't just about keeping our eyes open; we also need to be willing to open our mouths. We need to find the willingness and courage to speak about the important things. Sacred things. Things like compassion and forgiveness. Love. Fear. Death. Courage. These are holy things. We use the word holy to indicate things that are special and have been set apart—but Joseph encouraged us to remember that set apart should never mean locked away. We need to talk about the things that matter. If we don't talk about these

I hadn't thought about approaching death like that before. There is hospitality and caring. It connects with ideas of journey, closure and the hidden-ness of love after death ... the holy work of letting go.

things, who will? Without sharing, how can we develop the vocabulary? And without a sacred vocabulary, how can we even think about these things?

There was a lot to chew on, and then came the delicious curries.

At dinner, I sat beside a young woman from Cairo. She had studied architecture, but was now moving into the field of sustainable design. She was worried that too many buildings and ways of building were unnecessary and wasteful. She didn't want to be part of the waste—she'd rather develop new ways of working.

Religious language works like this, too. We build structures with our words. Livable, lovable, traditional and otherwise. These can shelter us, sustain us, and challenge us. Or not. They, too, can be wasteful so we need to be aware and careful. We need to be faithful, not just to the ways in which we've always described the world and our lives, but also to the reality of the Living God among us. We should choose our words carefully. They shape how we live. Do our stories and images help develop our compassion? Do they help us to see and serve Christ in all times and places? Does our language confine us to closed communities or open us to others?

In his October interview with Peter Mansbridge, Gord Downie spoke about preparing for his father's death. He said that together with his siblings, he helped "get our dad to the door." I love that. It is a beautiful way to put it. I hadn't thought about approaching death like that before. There is hospitality here and caring. It connects with ideas of journey, closure and the hidden-ness of love after death. But the image is concrete and active, too. For me, this is new and helpful language that speaks about the holy work of letting go.

I am glad for places where words can be new and where we can find new ways of seeing. The *Presbyterian Record* has been a place where that happens and it has been beautiful. Saying goodbye is hard. But we will find new places. Perhaps not as well-researched or as far-reaching, but our national conversations will continue. I think we're too hungry for connection and community to let our church grow too quiet.

Thanks for reading. 

Katie Munnik lives in Cardiff, Wales, with three kids and a professor husband. She blogs at The Messy Table on presbyterianrecord.ca.



Mary and Joseph Outside the Inn
John Runciman, between 1763 and 1768

PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

Exposed

Pushing back the darkness. *by* LAURENCE DEWOLFE

Christmas Eve
Luke 2:1-14

THERE'S SO MUCH IN THOSE FEW WORDS we hear year after year: "laid him in a manger;" "no room in the inn." But there's a problem. It's the word always translated in English as "inn." It makes us think of a Bethlehem Best Western. Or a few rooms above a tavern. Some place with shelter and beds.

The word in the original just means "guest room." Literally, it's "upper room." It could mean a place in the home of someone rich enough to have a house with a spare room up on the flat roof. It could also mean a big, open space, walled and roofed in on top of homes, market stalls, workshops, or stables. An eating place by day. At night a place for weary travellers to sleep on the floor with their possessions within easy reach.

More hostel than Holiday Inn. A person might be better off outside.

What about a couple about to have a baby? I think it's most likely Jesus is born in a very public place. Maybe where there's water, and some straw for animals.

Maybe they have some shelter. The family takes refuge in an alleyway. Or maybe just against the wall in the yard. Imagine Mary is stretched out on the ground, exhausted. Joseph sits up, but slumped over. They find a little box for their firstborn's first bed. A feed box, maybe. Not much bigger than a scoop for grain.

No farm animals looking on. No innkeeper. Not an angel in sight. They're alone, at least in that moment. Safe? Maybe for that moment. We want to believe they're safe. That's why we need them to be in a warm, unnaturally clean stable. ➤

Presbyterians Sharing

the good news of the gospel

PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY,
continued



Thank you for your gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing!*

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Nobody in this story is safe. Not the people uprooted at the whim of a far-away emperor. Not the crowds filling every corner in Bethlehem, waiting for the next decree to tell them where to go. Not the shepherds, out in the field, risking their lives for someone else's sheep.

In a religious and political tinderbox announcing the birth of a Saviour, Christ the Lord, is like lighting a torch. The glory of the Lord shines around those shepherds and strikes sparks that light a fire on the earth. Luke doesn't tell us exactly where Jesus is born because he wants us to get that Jesus is exposed to the world. Even at the moment of his birth there's nowhere to hide him.

If we really want to find him we have to look in the least expected, least likely, least hospitable places. We'll find him where we feared he might not be, believed he couldn't be, or forgot he would be. We can find courage to go where everyone and everything around us says there's no room for hope, no place for us, and no good news.

Jesus was born when and where everything and everyone around him said there was no hope for people like him and his family. No good news for anyone but the imperial one per cent.

We come together at the darkest time of the year to find some light. Light that will push all our darknesses back, if only a little. We look for a sanctuary, where it's safe to hope. We renew ourselves in this story, then go out into the night to live our stories. May we discover what it means that Jesus was born into our lives and circumstances. Exposed. Not protected from the darknesses that frighten us.

Jesus could have been born anywhere. But he's born in our world. ☩

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe is minister at Glenview, Toronto.



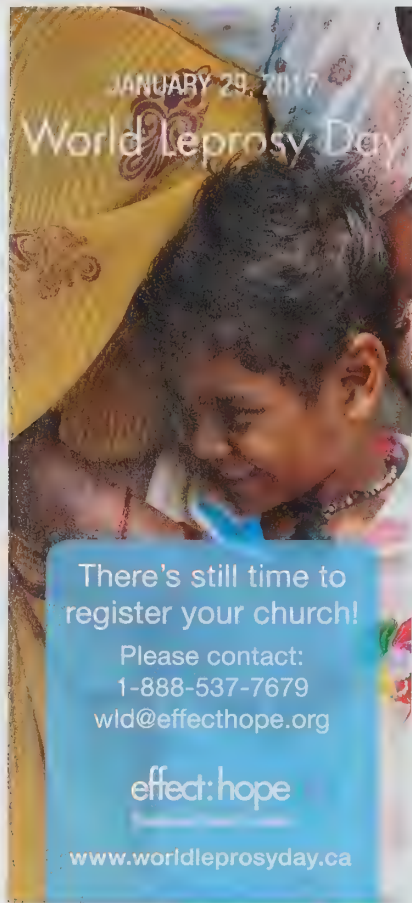
RENEWAL

A Call to Prayer

Then renewal will come. *by* NAN ST. LOUIS

I SUPPOSE MOST OF US have heard the words “change” and “transition” enough these days to last us a long time. The small course corrections that we all make daily sometimes (often?) result in significant changes down the road, decisions we make with prayer and an ear to God. And then there are the big changes that take us by surprise, coming sooner than expected, or events we should have been prepared for if we were paying attention.

The *Presbyterian Record* has been part of my life for some 45 years, challenging me, informing me, encouraging me, delighting me. I am sad to see it go. What will fill the empty place it leaves? As part of the Renewal Fellowship I have appreciated the newsletters, prayer chain, daily devotional, annual conference and website. Now as a member of the board, we are considering what we can offer the church to fill part >



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RENEWAL, continued

of the need for conversation, stimulation, encouragement.


We too are in transition as we look for a new executive director to help us fulfil our role in supporting renewal in our churches. Three years ago our General Assembly shone a spotlight on the need for renewal and agreed to take measures to help congregations. In the midst of the controversy on human sexuality, our theological differences have been front and centre, overshadowing the urgent need for individual and congregational renewal. The fellowship recognizes the need for leadership in renewal and we will be working to bring people and resources to congregations. Other agencies of the church will also be doing their part.

Of course, Jesus Christ is the one who gives us new life. Who breathes in us that Spirit. As we draw near to him, to listen, to

fellowship, our souls and spirits will be renewed, each of us, and all of us together.

We have some learning to do, not just to live our faith but to be able to talk about it. What encouragement we give and receive when we tell our story and hear others' stories of how God has been present; and then to move beyond that, hearing from those outside our faith circle, about others' spiritual quests, what they believe and need, what they are looking for, what they have found. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." How great is the need in our world today for those who can listen and understand, and offer the living water, the bread of life, to those who are hungry and thirsty.

The Renewal Fellowship calls everyone to pray: not just for our church, but daily seeking God, that He would be working through us in everything to draw others to Him.

The temptation is to pull into our shells. However, that is not what Jesus came for. Christ is out there in the streets, in the arenas, in the malls, in the schools, the hospitals, wherever people are. It takes faith and courage and wisdom in the Holy Spirit to be there with people, where they are, making God visible and audible. Then renewal will come. 

Rev. Nan St. Louis is chair of the Renewal Fellowship.

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SHARING WITNESS

Word Warrior

Seeking a new home in the church. *by* VIVIAN KETCHUM

The news of the *Record* no longer being published was upsetting to me as a novice writer. This was a place my pen and I considered home. It set off an odd reaction in me. My editor emailed requiring a final column from me for December. I had in the past had no problems sending

him a column or two as requested. Then I found that my pen and my ease of putting words to paper failed me. I assumed it was writer's block. I tried starting a paragraph or two, but it felt mechanical or wooden. It didn't connect what I wanted to convey in my heart and mind. Then I tried writing >

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SHARING WITNESS, continued

I realized that I don't accept change easily and losing the *Record* as a publication affected me and my ability to write easily. Maybe if I refused to send in that last column there wouldn't be any final goodbyes or a final deadline.

about technical issues. Again that was quickly deleted. I was writing about issues that I had little to no knowledge of.

First I thought I'd lost my gift of words. I was considered a word warrior in my community. A writer who writes about social issues from my personal experience—from an Indigenous point of view.

So I tried writing for another publication and had no problems coming up with a brief article for them. I hadn't lost my style of writing or my tools as a word warrior.

I realized that I don't accept change easily and losing the *Record* as a publication affected me and my ability to write easily. Maybe if I refused to send in that last column there wouldn't be any final goodbyes or a final deadline.

There have been too many goodbyes in my life. Yes, I realize goodbyes are a part of life, but not the goodbyes that I have had to say. Goodbye to my parents. Goodbye to my siblings. Each time I felt safe at the place where I was in my life. Then it was a goodbye time once again.

Subscriptions are necessary for a magazine to maintain its publications. Declining readership spelled

the end for the *Record*. The staff and board made the difficult decision to end the *Record's* lengthy publication. Still, this novice writer had found a home with its readers. Readers whom I will miss writing for.

My first column for the *Record* had me walking on air. The first time I saw it published. My name next to the words I wrote. Even a briefest of bio next to it. Like I was a real writer. That was what the *Record* affirmed for me. I was a writer.

Having my editor, Andrew Faiz, invite me to become a columnist for the *Record* was an invitation to a table of equals. Writing my story, my way. Being heard at a church level. My words not being watered down by the process of a church board.

As an Indigenous writer, I am going to miss the *Record* and the door that was just beginning to open for me and the stories that I have to share.

Hopefully this won't be a final goodbye for this word warrior. Here is to hoping my stories will find a new home with the church. ✚

Vivian Ketchum is Anishinabe of Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation, outside of Kenora, Ont. She lives in Winnipeg.

Life

Thoughts and inspiration for your daily life

CHRISTMAS ART CONTEST

Finding Light in Darkness

Thank you to all our readers, young and old, who coloured, painted and sketched for our final Christmas Art Contest.

by **CAROLINE BISHOP-GLOGOVIECKI**



Alex Glogoviecki, age 8, Toronto, Ont.



SO HERE WE ARE, putting the final touches on the final issue of the *Presbyterian Record*.

It's hard to believe this is the last time I'll have the thrill of looking through all our readers' art contest

entries and getting to choose the winner (this year that honour goes to Davna McLean of Knox, Waterloo, Ont. Congratulations, Davna!). I'm always amazed how much effort our readers dedicate to our art contest, even before snow hits the ground anywhere in our country.

I've been with the *Record* for just a month shy of a decade. I often describe this job as one of the best things that's ever happened to me. And it almost didn't happen. I saw the job posting on a magazine industry website and thought, what the heck, I'll give it a shot. Little did I know that the two guys who interviewed me that cloudy November afternoon back in 2005, Andrew and David, would be guests at my wedding. My colleagues here—Amy, Connie, Debb and Salina—are now also friends. It's so rare to find such an amazing group of people to work with.

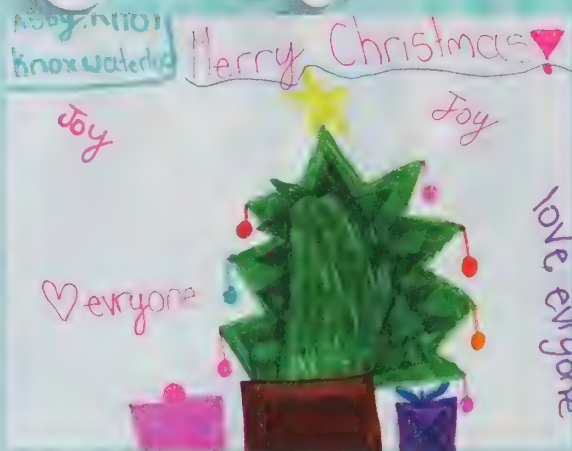
So although this is a tough time—this job is irreplaceable and I'll miss it terribly—I'm looking for the light in this darkness. I know it's there.

Things happen for a reason. Trust in the timing. Trust in God. 🍅

Caroline Bishop is the Record's art director.



Brooke, age 10,
St. James, Forest, Ont.



Aubrey Guse, age 6,
Knox, Waterloo, Ont.



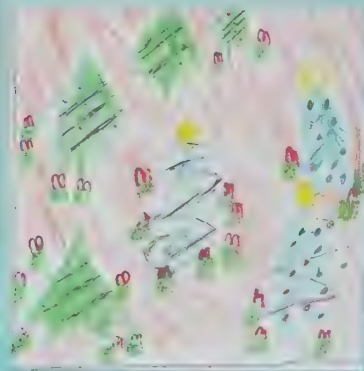
Jackson, age 5,
St. James, Forest, Ont.



Maya MacLachlan,
age 8, Knox, Oakville, Ont.



Bethany, age 9,
Knox, Waterloo, Ont.



Joshua Yaacoub, age 9,
St. Andrew's, Streetsville, Ont.

BENEDICTION

A Remarkable Team

It is a rare and wonderful thing. *by* DAVID HARRIS



LIKE YOU, I receive a copy of the *Presbyterian Record* each month in the mail. Among other things, it helps me assess how

it stands out in the mail pile. We are a magazine-reading family, with several periodicals arriving every week.

I am often struck by how well the *Record* stands out against magazines with budgets and staff that far exceed ours. That pride in the magazine continues when I open it. The content and the design easily hold their own.

Of course, I'm biased. But it's not that I'm thinking highly of myself. Rather, it's the amazing team I've been blessed to work with at the *Record* over the years. And it's astonishing how small that team is!

When I came to the magazine in 2002, there were four full- and one part-time employees, including me. Salaries consumed just over half our revenue—and that's remained pretty much the same throughout my time.

For several years, we reduced the staff to just four full-time positions.

It wasn't until 2008 that we added another full-time writer, bringing our complement to five. Five full-time people—that's completely amazing when you consider the product and what we achieved.

The two other big changes that happened during my time at the magazine were the development of technology and wholesale changes in the printing industry. Technology meant one person could manage both circulation and fundraising, and provide administrative support.

Changes in printing meant we could publish a glossy magazine on recycled paper in full colour—a luxury we couldn't dream of when I arrived in 2002. Back then, printing (on newsprint) and postage consumed more than 40 per cent of our budget. Today, it costs less than half that.

Finally, we've gone from being nearly insolvent in 2005 to having published for more than another decade and being able to meet our legal obligations while properly winding up the corporation.

How did we do it? Well, there are two groups of people I want to thank

from the bottom of my heart.

First, you, dear readers. So very many of you—half of you at one time or another—supported the magazine generously with donations. Since 2005, you've given almost \$1.5 million to the *Record*. Without that support, we would have folded years ago. So thank you, thank you, thank you!

Secondly, there's the *Record* team. I have worked with many wonderful and talented people in my nearly 30 years as a journalist, but I have never worked with such a remarkable group of colleagues as I have at this magazine.

Senior editor Andrew Faiz came to the *Record* two years after I began. A columnist with the magazine in Jim Dickey's time, Andrew brought not only the accumulated skill of someone who had worked in newspapers, film and television journalism, but also the perspective of someone who was ordained an elder in the church at 19 and had served as a student minister.

I cannot thank Andrew enough or overemphasize the crucial role he has played at the *Record* these past dozen years. Having someone of his ability to guide the magazine and the other >

BENEDICTION, continued

editorial staff freed me to focus on the business and fundraising aspect of the publication.

Andrew's fingerprints are all over the magazine, but his reporting and photographs from Afghanistan in 2007 and his coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis from Central Europe last year particularly stand out for me.

The longest-serving colleague is Amy MacLachlan. She came to us fresh from journalism school at Carleton University, recommended by one of my friends who was one of Amy's professors. There's a debt that can't be repaid!

Amy began as a part-time writer and ends her career at the *Record* as managing editor. In between, she has reported from Ethiopia and India as well as travelling to Israel and points all over Canada and the United States. She also became a much-loved speaker at Presbyterian women's conferences.

The third and newest journalist on the team is Constance Wardle. Newest is relative, however, given that Connie joined us in 2008. Connie is the daughter of a minister and was also president of the Presbyterian Young People's Society, so she brought deep connections and an uncommon familiarity with Presbyterian polity to the *Record*.

Connie has also reported from places far and near and was seconded by the World Council of Churches to cover the Interfaith Summit on Climate Change in New York in 2014.

Of course, no magazine, no matter how lovely the words, will be widely read if it isn't designed to invite the reader into the stories. For the past decade, that responsibility, as art director, has been handled graciously and superbly by Caroline Bishop.

Caroline has worked at a number of the biggest magazine publishers in Canada and has won many awards for her work. Since 2014, she has also

Perhaps most
importantly,
we were a team
—a group of
people united by
a common vision
to produce the
best possible
magazine with the
resources available.

been art director of *Weddingbells*.

What sets Caroline apart in the world of design is the care with which she reads the stories she lays out. That's what has given the *Record* that feeling that all the parts are working together—as if one super-person was responsible for the entire product, writing and design.

Of course, even Caroline can't do it all, and in recent years she broadened her team and brought Salina Vanderhorn on board to assist her in the production of each issue.

And then there is the web. We've had our own web page since 2005 (and more recently added Facebook pages). Connie Wardle has been our web editor, in addition to her other writing and editing duties, and Wil McGilvery has looked after the back end of our website.

We hope to keep that website online, albeit dormant, so that readers will still be able to access it.

Beautifully designed and beautifully written, the *Record* wouldn't be seen by


readers without a circulation manager to look after subscriptions and address changes. Deborah Leader has done that and more. She has also overseen 11 years of donations from our generous readers, making sure thank-you letters and tax receipts have been properly processed.

This past year, we also tried to engage donors in putting the *Record* in their will and making more substantial gifts than usually received in our bi-annual appeal. Lisa Van Arem was hired to do that, and she did a wonderful job. Within the first month of launching our legacy program, donors responded.

It's unfortunate that we weren't able to launch this program earlier, or we might have staved off our closing, but we thank Lisa for her work and donors for their responses.

Lastly, huge thanks are due to our advertising representatives, Fenn Corporation. Don Fenn and his team of Stuart Teather and Carol McCormick (recently retired), worked assiduously to bring advertisers and the *Record* together. Their efforts alone kept us alive longer than would otherwise have been possible.

Perhaps most importantly with respect to all the above-mentioned people, we were a team—a group of people united by a common vision to produce the best possible magazine with the resources available.

The ability to work together is key to any success story. It's not that everyone agreed all the time—creativity flourishes only where people can take risks together and challenge each other with new ideas. But respect for the role of the *Record* in the life of the Presbyterian Church community was always paramount. We hope that showed in our efforts. 

David Harris is the Record's publisher and editor.

BENEDICTION



Joe and Amy with Maya and Kira and Rev. Jacqui Foxall on the day of the girls' baptism.

Tangled

It's not just a job. *by* AMY MACLACHLAN



I'VE BEEN PUTTING OFF WRITING THIS because, my goodness, what can I possibly say?

I came to this magazine back in 2003—fresh out of J-school and not really even knowing if this journalism gig was for me.

And I'm still unsure.

What I am sure of, however, is that this magazine changed my life. Well, maybe not changed it so much as wrote the last 13 years of it.

I was raised Catholic and knew absolutely zero of the Presbyterian

Church. But upon coming to the *Record*, I promptly got my butt to my local Presbyterian congregation (St. Andrew's, Brampton, Ont., at the time) to figure out what it was all about. Fast forward a year, and I was married in that church. Speed along four years, and my husband and I welcomed our first child—a life change that the *Record* enabled me to negotiate beautifully by allowing a work-life balance many only dream of. Zip along another almost four years and our second daughter was born, and a year or so after that, we found a new Presbyterian church home in Oakville, where we are now members and where both our girls were baptized.

Working for the *Record* and having a team of like-minded colleagues has meant that my family never had to come second. (Or not often, anyway!) As long as the magazine went out, I was free to plan my days at will; I was volunteering in the classroom, tagging along on my daughters' field trips, taking time to attend during-the-day school assemblies that my kids were a part of, and dropping them off at school myself and picking them up as well. This has been such a monumental blessing—and one for which I will be forever grateful.

I am now closely involved in my church—something I'm not sure would have happened had I not been so >

BENEDICTION, continued



connected to the denomination as a whole. I'm so connected, in fact, that once the *Record* winds up, my main prospect and hope is focused on a new project in a neighbouring presbytery I'm hoping and praying will get off the ground.

Along the way there have been many exciting travels—when I went to Ethiopia only a few months after joining the *Record*, it was my first international adventure. The only other time I'd been on a plane was when I headed to Alberta for college, and just about my only other non-Canadian trip was to Disney World when I was nine. But I loved every minute of Ethiopia, and I was hooked—hooked on international travel, sure, but even more so on the idea of mission: on what it means and the ways it can and should be carried out and the awesome opportunities for connection,

community-building and empowerment it can afford.

I have met, and chatted with, and gone for coffee with, and dreamed with, and argued with, and established what I hope are lifelong friendships with such a huge array of wonderful people whom I can only assume I would never have met had it not been for my job.

My stories in the *Record* have mirrored my faith journey; I can remember sitting in religion class as a child, wishing so badly that I had known Jesus when he walked the earth. But the idea of discipleship, that faith is not just about your beliefs but is a way of life, revealed itself more and more to me as I wrote for the *Record* (and read other people's words that have appeared here). It is fitting, then, that my final story for

this magazine is about something I have slowly come to discover as the Truth—the need for a relationship- and justice-focused faith that author and activist Shane Claiborne so passionately promotes.

This job and this church have touched nearly every aspect of my life, and saying goodbye will be no easy task. This job has not been merely something I go to in the morning and come home from at night; it has not merely been a paycheck; it has not merely been something I suffer through each day until the bell goes (and there have been some of those days!). It has been intricately connected to who I am, to who my family is, to who my friends are, to how I spend my time. My faith life and my work life and my family life and my extra-curricular life are all tangled up together—all a part

of and influenced by this job, this magazine, this church.


How, exactly, does one move on from that? How do you begin the untangling? And once you do, does the whole thing unravel?

I haven't even mentioned the actual job—how it took me from a know-nothing novice writer to an editor who now

**This job has
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I spend my time.**

marks up others' stories with red pen; who shapes stories and issues, and crafts ideas and relationships with writers; and how it has taught me to hone my own writing skills; and how, finally, just a couple of years ago, led me to finding my voice—that enigmatic thing any writer must discover—a thing that enables you to let your soul speak.

Of course this is all thanks to the wonderful people I work with on this magazine—David and Andrew and Connie and Caroline and Salina and Debb. Partners-in-crime, like-minded lunatics, supporters, enablers, chastisers. Family.

To borrow the words of *Record* board member, Andrew Cornell, who penned our editorial in October, it has been “a beautiful life” indeed. 

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's managing editor.

BENEDICTION

Living in Expectation

And trusting in God. *by* **CONNIE WARDLE**



I FOUND OUT I WAS PREGNANT IN MID-SUMMER. My husband and I weren't exactly planning to have a baby. Like most couples, we'd discussed the possibility and we decided we'd be okay with it if it happened. But there's a big difference between talking about a hypothetical baby and preparing for a real one.

I knew by that point, too, that there was a distinct possibility this magazine, and my job of eight years, would be coming to an end in the not-too-distant future. Even knowing it could be coming, and knowing as fall approached that it was likely, when the decisions were finally made and it all became real it still came as a shock. Among ourselves we talked about the news story announcing the end of the magazine as "the *Record* obituary" because it felt like that.



I know the news caught a lot of people by surprise. We so often assume the things we're accustomed to in the church will endure forever, despite what we might know intellectually about declines in income or attendance. We don't like to face the facts without veiling them with optimism, or downplaying the relative importance of dollars in the Kingdom of God. But in the church as in life, many of the things we take for granted will one day be gone.

Sometimes it's not a matter of whether something will come to an end one day, but how we choose to let it go. As hard as it is to say goodbye to this magazine, I'm glad it's still something we can be proud of. I know we've done our best. I know I'll miss it.

And so I find myself preparing both for a death, in a way, of something that I have nursed with my mind and my energy and with the companionship of my amazing colleagues, and for the birth of a new life that is growing inside me. I'll nourish him or her with my body, and my husband and I hope with our minds and our energy—although I understand both of those things feel like they're in short supply once a newborn is on the scene.

Because of the way the timing has worked out, I've found myself having to give people both pieces of news at once—we're having a baby, and the magazine is coming to an end. It leaves a bittersweet note.

I say "I'm expecting," and everyone knows exactly what I mean. The idea of expectation alone is synonymous with news of a new life.

So I'm expecting. I'm watching my belly grow, and I'm thinking about how I will make space in my apartment and my life for this new baby. I imagine God's hands knitting

a child together in the shelter of my ribs. I get to keep that child close for a while yet. This is expected to be a March baby. And when my son or daughter arrives, we'll get to show them so many things for the very first time. I can't imagine anything more like a new start.


I don't know what the future holds for my career. I pray that God has something in mind for me. I'll do my best to look for it. I suppose in this way, too, I'm expecting.

I've been turning to the first chapter of Luke a lot lately. I've always admired Mary's response to the news that she, a then unwed girl from an obscure village, would be the mother of the Messiah: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." I wonder if she doubted her mothering skills, or if she was able to trust that God saw in her a potential she didn't see in herself. I can't imagine she saw the future unrolling before her full of clear plans and goals. She must have been going on trust, too.

I'm taking it one day at a time. I'm

Sometimes it's not a matter of whether something will come to an end one day, but how we choose to let it go. As hard as it is to say goodbye to this magazine, I'm glad it's still something we can be proud of.

making plans, knowing I may need to abandon them if God has other ideas. I'm grateful for what I have, and for the time I've been able to work in this small corner of the vast kingdom. I know there's still kingdom work for me to do. And I pray daily for the new person my husband and I will be bringing into the world. I hope they, and the man or woman they grow to become, will be a blessing to others and will help make this world a little more beautiful for having been a part of it.

Although this publication may be coming to an end, its work, as with all kingdom work, is best when it's seen in the lives of people. I hope its stories have inspired, and troubled, and encouraged you. And I pray the same things for you as I do for my baby: may you make the world a little more beautiful, more full of grace, more restless for justice. I hope this world will look a little more like heaven because you have been a part of it. 

Connie Wardle is the Record's senior writer and online editor.

BENEDICTION

Have Confidence

God is calling loudly and clearly. *by* **ANDREW FAIZ**



GROWING UP IN JAMAICA, Germaine Lovelace was a typical teen boy—filled with hormones, angst and rebellion. The Moravian church to which his family belonged had a punitive approach to youthfulness. The punishment he was given only increased the angst. He went off course in his mid-teens, dealing dope to the rich kids at school, and partaking himself.

That's when a six-foot-seven-inch Scottish lady, an administrator at the school, called him into her office. They talked about the football at which he excelled on the pitch, and her favourite team, ManU. She invited him to come to her Presbyterian church that Sunday. She picked him up at the bus stop, two more Scottish ladies in the car with her.

He got involved in that church. He cleaned himself up. He went back to his home church and got involved there. While seeking post-secondary

education he became even more involved in the Moravian church. He felt a calling to the ministry. He met a girl.

He was a pastor at a church where he didn't take a holiday for two years. Feeling burned out, he told his congregation he needed some time off. Someone offered him a month in Southern Ontario. He went to Niagara Falls a few times.

At another crisis in his life, now married with a young boy, he thought of the two churches with which he'd been associated, the Moravian and the Presbyterian. That's how he ended up at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver, with \$4,000 in his pocket.

As that money quickly evaporated, a short-term position opened up 2,500 kilometres away. The family of three had a great summer serving First, Kenora, Ont. After they returned to Vancouver for Lovelace to finish his studies, the struggling Kenora congregation got a financial boost from a planned gift. They called Lovelace.

His banker wife also got a great job offer in Kenora. Off they went in the dead of winter.

Forty-below is hard on locals;

punishing on newcomers. The Lovelaces were three of only six black people in Kenora. It was hard and depressing. Plus the nearest Presbyterian clergy person was hundreds of kilometres away. It was lonely. Husband and wife talked of getting out, cutting their losses.

Just then, an emissary from the Renewal Fellowship showed up on his annual Encouragement Road Trip. Rev. Germaine Lovelace poured his heart out to Rev. Fred Stewart. At the end of the visit, Lovelace felt a renewed energy to continue his Kenora ministry. That was two years ago; he's still there.

Talk to Lovelace and he'll tell you this story; and he'll underline each moment, and there are more than reported here, when God nudged him, sent him an angel, corrected him.

And if you haven't got the point, let me repeat it: There's a Jamaican-born minister reviving a once-struggling congregation in northern Ontario. In mid-October this year, First ordained new elders. There are children in the church again.

Somehow God picked this family in rural Jamaica and guided them to rural Canada.



BENEDICTION, continued



Germaine Lovelace, Marsha and Secoya.

Or as they say in Malawi: God is good. All the time.

Have confidence in God. Have confidence in what God is doing. A God who nudged First, Kenora, back from life support. There were dark days along the way, for the Lovelace family and for the Kenora church. Not all things made sense all the time.

We churchy people say with our mouths that we do not know the will of God. But apparently we do—we know exactly who God would bless, know exactly who and what God would accept. We make lists of God's intentions. And then we fight amongst ourselves, bitterly, to prove our god's the superior. We have lost confidence in God.

We have lost confidence in our stories. We have lost confidence that Christ is amongst us. Theology is not our God. Tradition is not our God. The Bible is not our God. They are mere tools that help us know God.

God is God. And God is good. All the time. The hand of God continues to guide us. The work of the church never ends; our ministries, personal, communal, corporate, never end. In God's care there are no endings, just continual rebirths.

And the God who gave us Germaine Lovelace, and so many other remarkable rebirths we are unable to see because we are busy tossing our gods at each other, is here and present and stirring us to a new, strange future. We have to let God be God; honour the deaths, keep ourselves alive to the rebirths.

This is a time for boldness. A time for entrepreneurship, for risk taking (we have nothing left to lose). This is a time for vulnerability and honesty. This is a time to cash in the building and take church to the streets. This is the time to listen to the voice of God—it is not a whisper. It is calling us from all around. We just can't hear it

with our earmuffs on inside our echo chambers.

And ... I would like to believe the Presbyterian Church in Canada is perfectly situated to be the denomination that can best ride this radical change in all that was once comfortable. It is small enough to mobilize, has solid roots and a few extra pennies (albeit buried away; if we can use 'em for pensions, we can use 'em for Christ's mission). It needs fearless leadership, which I think it has in place more than we realize or are willing to admit, from local congregations, national offices and the colleges. And it needs entrepreneurial energy. That's a thing we've misplaced in our trauma.

Jesus loves us, this we know, because God loved us first. Have confidence. ✚

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.



PWS&D Developments

The quarterly newsletter for Presbyterian World Service & Development • 2016 Edition, Issue 4

ABRIDGED
VERSION



"I cannot express how happy I am"

HOW MATERNAL HEALTH PROGRAMS ARE BRINGING JOY TO FAMILIES IN AFGHANISTAN

KHORI FELT LIKE A BURDEN TO HER HUSBAND, CONSTANTLY having to ask him to take her to the health centre in the city. In the poor, remote Afghan village they live in, there is no hospital close by. Travelling was expensive, and Khori soon grew hesitant to seek the care she needed.

The scarcity of health services in rural Afghanistan creates an especially dire situation for pregnant women, new mothers and their children. Without proper medical care, becoming a mother can be life threatening. Even if medical services are available, strict cultural barriers often exclude women from accessing the necessary services and treatment, and exercising control over their reproductive health.

PWS&D has been working with partners in Afghanistan and Malawi to address these issues since 2011. By establishing new health facilities, training birth attendants and educating and engaging communities about the importance of maternal health and proper newborn care, PWS&D's maternal and child health program is helping women and children survive childbirth and have healthy and hopeful lives.

In 2015, the Government of Canada announced its approval of up to \$4.1 million for a new PWS&D maternal health project, which will be twice the size and build ►





“If this facility did not exist, we might have had to travel far or would have done the delivery at home, which in both cases would have been very risky.”

Shazia is one of these mothers. One day, she arrived at a PWS&D-supported outpatient clinic in Afghanistan, cradling her desperately malnourished daughter, tiny in the folds of her floral blanket. Shazia believed her baby was afflicted with a bad omen and sought treatment from traditional healers. Health workers explained that her daughter was malnourished and treated the baby immediately. The little girl’s health is improving each day.

Shazia now knows how vital it is to ensure correct medical care, rather than treatment from traditional healers. Mothers are also learning about nutritious newborn diets and the benefits of breastfeeding through PWS&D-supported health sessions.

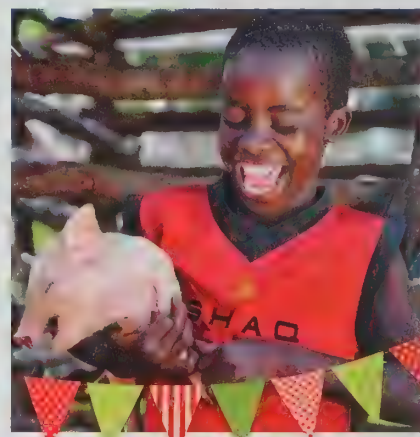
While the journey to ensure healthy, abundant life for all is not over, changing attitudes and the growing availability of health services in Malawi and Afghanistan are cause for celebration. PWS&D is committed to this vital work because with every new clinic constructed, midwife trained and health session conducted, mothers and newborns are surviving and thriving—one community at a time. ■

This program receives generous support from the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada.



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada



***Give a Gift
with Meaning!***

The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s Gifts of Change catalogue helps support marginalized communities and bring hope and opportunity to families around the world! The new 2016-2017 gift catalogue is now available. View an array of meaningful new projects your family, friends or congregation can support together. Not only is a gift from our catalogue unique, you can be sure that it will be used to carry out programs that are helping families overcome hunger, poverty, conflict and disaster. Visit **WeRespond.ca/gifts-of-change** to view these life-changing gifts!

on the success of the previous project (2011-2014). PWS&D is thrilled to carry on the work that is empowering women and girls and growing the availability of health services in Afghanistan and Malawi.

The project has been immensely valuable to Khorī, who no longer feels like a burden to her family. Funds from the program went towards establishing a new health centre in her village. “It is now easy to get medical assistance,” she shares.

When Khorī’s daughter-in-law was pregnant, she was able to have routine check-ups at the new centre. Because it is close by, both women could travel there themselves, feeling confident and independent. Under the care of practised birth attendants, Khorī’s daughter-in-law delivered a healthy baby boy.

“I cannot express how happy I am,” says Khorī. “If this facility did not exist, we might have had to travel far or would have done the delivery at home, which in both cases would have been very risky.”

Health education and changing societal attitudes are also improving the way mothers care for their newborns.

Focus

Stories of mission, ministry and community



MINISTRY

Left on the Vine

Stories we were working on.

by RECORD STAFF

THE MAGAZINE may be no more, but the stories of the Presbyterian Church in Canada continue. Some articles take years to mature; some come to print quickly. (Yes, some are published prematurely; that happens, it's called journalism.)

This is not a complete list of stories we left ripening on the vines. Some of these have been in the works for years, some we began preliminary work on only recently. >

MINISTRY, continued

How a Church Goes Wrong.

This happens to congregations for far too many reasons. Often there is neither villain nor saint. Instead, a group of well-intended people following their best instincts end up fighting bitterly with each other, until presbytery has to come in and shut the place down. Ministers get caught in the fracas. Sometimes they start it. It's a very difficult story to tell honestly. There is a binder of notes and data from a few congregations; we just couldn't work out how to tell the story since it would have to be told with a lot of anonymous sources.

Food!

This was so close to being finished. Reams of research, book-reading and interviews now sit in a certain someone's computer and notebooks. This was a story about the centrality of food to our faith—how it's not only linked to hospitality, but to social justice, to community, and to the very heart of what we believe.

Money!

There is money in the church. Someplace. Some presbyteries have a lot of cash lying around. So do some congregations. Another difficult story to tell because it requires investigative journalism, which requires a lot of time and patience—and likely some ruffled feathers.

Missions.

There are congregational missions. Presbytery missions. And of course national projects. The latter are easy to source. The other two are sometimes difficult to find. There's a mission to ageing Koreans and also Chinese; there are missions to new immigrants,

sex workers, seniors, Natives suffering from the aftermath of residential schools, and many others. We tried to squeeze one into each issue; it was not always possible.

International Missions.

We have travelled as widely as we could. We've been to Malawi, India, Hungary, Afghanistan, Ghana and other places. Through our partners, like ACT Alliance and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, our church's financial contributions are felt in every obscure corner of the planet. For example, our partners are involved in refugee camps in Jordan. We'd hoped to get there. Also, we had a story on Kenya slated for early 2017, and for years we wanted to visit our partners in Central America to tell of the work happening there, but time simply ran out.

Profiles.

We were starting to make a list of Presbyterians who have shared their good fortune and their skills to make dynamic and long lasting changes. Les Young, in Edmonton, for example, was a member of Alberta parliament, and has been a driving force behind a new cutting-edge housing development at Westmount. David Jennings recently received an honorary doctorate from St. Andrew's Hall for his remarkable leadership. Vivian Ketchum's personal story rolled out this year in her column but there's more to her. There are others who deserve recognition and whose stories inspire us all.

Artistry and Spirituality.

Florence MacGregor, who worships at St. Andrew's, Toronto, is the first recipient of the Christopher

Plummer Artistic Scholarship Award. An accomplished actor, seen at Stratford for years, she has been developing a seminar that melds the worlds of the actor and the preacher; worlds, she argues, which have the same roots. Incarnating the spiritual; using the body to express the text.

Han-Ca and Other Culturally-Based Church Communities.

Culturally exclusive congregations are a good idea and a bad idea. As in the rest of the denomination, the young aren't choosing church as a viable source for their spiritual needs.

The Effect of Multiculturalism & Immigration on the PCC.

The title says it all. The church has changed; you can't tell by looking at the participants at General Assembly, and that's part of the story.

Presbytery—A Love/Hate Relationship.

Some are extremely dysfunctional. Some aren't. What are the best practices? Or are there any? Is it a concept that needs radical rethinking?

Death.

We're going to live longer and with that will come challenges. We were looking to get a palliative care nurse and a prominent Presbyterian theologian to talk about death.

More on the Missional Church.

And more on church planting. Lots more. More on entrepreneurial practices to develop missional projects.



Michaela MacLeod, age 17,
East Lake Ainslie, N.S.

Bill C-14

Medical assistance in dying. This goes with the death issue, but also deserves to be dealt with on its own. When the bill was introduced, the comments on PCC-related Facebook pages were pretty even on either side. Another important if divisive issue.

Synods—Do We Need Them Anymore?

Hardly anymore for the purposes of polity. A few run camps. But is that enough to justify another polity layer?

Interim Ministry.

It's an art, a science and a mission. As more churches struggle, specialized interim ministry pastors are needed to help shape the future.

Second, Third, Fourth Career Ministers.

They're older, more experienced, more certain of themselves. They may be more financially secure and less inclined to be rocked by congregational and denominational pressures. They're changing the way we do church.

Two-Career Ministers.

More and more ministers are working part-time in the pulpit with another day job. This is how it used to be, and how it is in many other denominations.

Lots of Miscellania.

There have been good submissions languishing in all of our inboxes. Some that needed a little massaging, some that required a lot of restructuring. Altogether dozens of ideas waiting for their time in print. +



THE PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

1920s - 1950s

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ISSUE
JULY-AUGUST, 1957

THE CHILDREN'S RECORD

Go ye into all the World and preach the Gospel to every Creature.

early 1900s

March, 1945

THE PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

85



R.C.A.F. Photo

Front row, left to right: S/L F. R. Anderson, London, Ontario; S/L G. M. Grant, Toronto; S/L I. A. Norris, Brandon, Man.; G/C G. O. Lightbourn, Toronto; S/L F. W. MacLean, Winnipeg; S/L R. D. Binning, Wetaskiwin, Alta.
Back row, left to right: S/L N. J. Crees, Victoria, B.C.; S/L J. A. Hocking, Athabasca, Alta.



Mrs. Morton's Girls.

HIS group of faces is from a photograph we have received from Mrs. Morton the talented and devoted wife of Rev. Dr. Morton, of Trinidad. These girls have been under special training for about a year, and have made marked progress in reading, writing, bible knowledge, and in the domestic arts. The elderly woman in the group is a Bible woman, the wife of a catechist. She visits the women and their homes and helps to gather them into the school house for instruction on week-day afternoons. One of the five girls can give a Scripture lesson admirably either in English or Hindustani. The others are not so far advanced. Four of the girls are East Indian; one is partly African.

TOURISM IS A GLOBAL industry, which has a two-edged effect upon the world's peoples. In a previous issue of *The Record* (October, 1974) I raised the question as to whether tourism is a blessing or a blight, particularly for those whose countries are visited.

Since that time the increases in various parts of the world have shown an increasing interest in tourism. In Canada this was made the theme of a C.B.C. "Man Alive" program. Under the title "Welcome to Paradise" I examined the effects of tourism on the peoples in the places visited, particularly in the Caribbean.

In a provocative article headed "Fly Now — Pray Later,"

37

A PARTHEID THE CHURCH, AND VIOLENCE

by Martin Ingles

Over a four-month period of deputation among many different congregations, questions would inevitably arise concerning South Africa. "Is the situation there as serious as the television programmes suggest?" Or, "Why is the church so preoccupied with South Africa when there are many obvious instances of oppression in other countries?" These questions will be considered in this article along with some discussion concerning the attitude of the church in an area of increasing violence.

First, the situation in South Africa is very serious. So serious that the South African government has decided that foreigners should not be able to see the extent of the violence on television. Even print reporters are having their access to trouble spots seriously curtailed. Apartheid has been the official policy of South Africa since 1948. Since that time the apparatus of racial segregation has been refined. Blacks are told where they must



1980s

"Is it right to conceal the identity of AIDS patients?"

by David S. Thompson

HI THERE!

I'VE BEEN ASKED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT CHURCH GROWTH. THAT'S RIGHT - THAT OLD NEGATIVE - CHURCH GROWTH. IN THE PAST IT HAS USUALLY BEEN A HO-HUM SUBJECT. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN... THE SAME OLD PEOPLE... ASKING THE SAME OLD QUESTIONS... IN THE SAME OLD PAINFUL WAY. WELL, I GUESS THAT'S

WHERE I COME IN. THE NEXT SEVEN PAGES ARE ABOUT CHURCH GROWTH. I WILL TRY TO MAKE IT PAINLESS. (INSPIRE OF MY NEGATIVE FRIEND)

SURE, SURE! THE OLD NUMBERS GAME! ALL OVER AGAIN EH!



The Board of Congregation Life has a Lot to Share With You!

Harry, Helen, Alex, Ray, Margaret and Shirley... the staff of the B.C.L. - represent Presbyterians sharing stewardship, education, evangelism, church and society, worship and support - all offered to your congregation via the Board of Congregation Life. The Board of Congregation Life has a budget for 1987 of \$512,000 made possible through your support of Presbyterians Sharing.

The total goal of Presbyterians Sharing for 1987 is \$1,000,000 from congregations.

"PRESBYTERIAN SHARING..."

Retrospective

JANUARY 1990

600 REFUGEES LATER
See page 16

PRESBYTERIAN Record

November 2001

After the attack

How then should we live?

pages 3, 6, 14, 15, 35

MEDITATION

Winter Speculation

Read: I Corinthians 15:35-58 and I John 3:1-3

It is February! The night is endless, black and frigid. Our cottage-like living room is wood-fire warm and aglow with the soft light from a lamp on an old oak whiskey barrel that serves as an end table. Nearby, an over-stuffed couch has been trying to swallow me all evening to the tunes of Loreena McKennitt.

Snoozing normally comes easy to such a setting. But not tonight. At least, not for me. Since the time of

"When they bury you, what happens to your body?"

"I guess it ... yawn ... sort of soaks back into the dirt."

There is a long pause during which I almost succeed in drifting back to land of snooze. The pause is then shattered with a timidly whispered question.

"But, Daddy, if our body is soaked back into the dirt, what is Jesus going to do?"

**Linda Bell,
first woman Moderator
of the General Assembly
welcomed by
Past Moderator
John Cameron**

Shouting for MOR

FEATURE
Interview with
Samantha Nutt

Visible Words

ETHICS

Why Work Isn't Working

2010s

2000s

Union

and after

Presbyterians who opposed organic union may have been stubborn
but they were not sectarian

[illegible][illegible]

...to be in the best interests of the church, but not in the
...of fracturing its present unity. Some suggested a federation
...one step on the way to full organic union. Although this
...commitment has been challenged at points in our

John Congram

Life

Thoughts and inspiration for your daily life

**Change
the World**

Four easy things you
can do with your kids
or grandkids

Oliver I admit. That title proves
was a lot. But think of it like this:
I once heard someone talk
about how people think they
need to make big contributions
to the world as "legacy" or
some huge dramatic gesture.
Something so head-turning
and philanthropic that you get
their name on a plaque.

Learning to preach: and learning to listen

39



A Loyal Opposition

Gone too soon. by JOHN CONGRAM

Amelia Rozoniak
Knox, Waterloo, Ont.

AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY in 1988 I was appointed editor of this magazine. With restructuring of church offices looming on the horizon, the Administrative Council had requested that all new appointments be interim appointments. However, the Assembly decided to exempt the appointment of the editor from this decision.

Before allowing my name to stand for editor I asked several people the same question: "What is the role of a church magazine in the church?" The answer that stuck with me

over the years and, in many ways guided my decisions, was the response of Al Forrest, then the editor of the *United Church Observer*. He said the role of a church magazine was to be the loyal opposition. It was not always an easy task to be both critical of what the church said and did and still be loyal.

I soon discovered that when the church began to restructure church offices. I wrote what I considered a bland editorial stating that while restructuring could be a useful tool we should not be overly optimistic that it would

solve all of our challenges and problems. Soon afterwards I received a visit from the chair of restructuring who declared that I was not a team player.

Over the years the magazine has had a useful role as a helpful critic of the church. It is something the average church member and the staff of the church often find hard to understand. There is the assumption among some that the church, as a “divine” institution, should be above criticism. Recently the sins of the church that have come to light should have finally disabused us of this notion.

When I was appointed editor some felt I was too liberal. After serving a few years, others believed I was too conservative. This encouraged me to believe that I was at least fair. Ken Bagnell, former editor of the *Imperial Oil Review*, told me he enjoyed reading the *Record* because it always tried to be fair to all views in the church. I think this was what the first editor of the *Record*, James Croil, had in mind when he wrote in 1872 that he saw no reason why “The Presbyterian Church in Canada may not hope to establish and maintain a model magazine, one liberal enough to give expression to every shade of opinion consistent with essential principles, catholic enough to commend itself to Christendom and cheap enough to find its way into every Presbyterian family.”

During my 14 years as editor we operated with a staff of about half the size of the present staff of the *Record*. Though small they worked with a sense of calling and dedication to the magazine. Despite a slow decline in subscriptions we were able to retain a higher percentage of our constituent membership as subscribers than other major church magazines.

Over the years I have witnessed the demise of a number of excellent church periodicals. Often their death did not



relate directly to either the quality of the magazine in design or content. By almost any measure the present magazine would be considered of high quality yet we gather to bid it goodbye. The remarkable amount of money that the present editor raised in support of the magazine over the past few years indicates a significant amount of goodwill towards the *Record* still resides in the membership of our church.

The role of the editor of a church magazine is many faceted. It involves not only writing editorials but interviewing and writing articles, managing a staff, preparing budgets and promotion, promotion, promotion. I think that promotion allowed us to keep our financial head above water during my time. We also cut corners by using newsprint and little colour except on the cover.

During my time, the *Record* Committee decided that the magazine should be established as a corporation. This was done for two reasons. There was a constant fear that the federal postal subsidy might be withdrawn from church publications. Some actually had lost this subsidy. The Canadian Church Press, of which we were a member, advised that if possible member publications should incorporate as a way to signal to the federal government that we were not simply an

in-house publication of the denomination. Our church had always allowed the *Record* this semi-autonomous existence but this would formalize it. This would also ensure this independent existence for the magazine would continue. A number of times over its existence, including most recently during restructuring, the suggestion was made that the *Record* should become a part of a church committee. This idea was always rejected by the *Record* Committee and the church.

In preparing this piece I have had the opportunity to look over some of the issues during my time as editor. What a wonderful array of stories and writers. One of the longest running columnists who creatively and effectively wrote the “You were asking?” column was Tony Plomp. Ironically his death coincided with the decision of the *Record* corporation to cease publication. The demise of the magazine is sad for many reasons: for the present staff who will no longer have a job, for the subscribers who found the magazine was a way for them to participate in their church, and for the many contributors to the magazine. Where will they find creative expression for their talents? Where will a variety of views, especially dissident points of view, have an opportunity to be heard widely in our church?

Typically, when a church magazine ceases to publish, the national church attempts to fill the void by producing a newsletter for the church. But few of these are able to replace the many functions of a church magazine. And none of them that I have read have succeeded in retaining that critical voice that helps to keep the church healthy and honest, to provide in Al Forrest’s words, the loyal opposition.

Goodbye dear friend, you left us too soon. ☙

Rev. John Congram was the Record’s editor from 1998-2002.



Michelle, age 2,
St. Matthew's,
Ingleside, Ont

Diversions & Alarms

Why do we maintain our existence and for what?

by JAMES R. DICKEY

“We rarely find that people have good sense unless they agree with us.”

— François de La Rochefoucauld

For some, the demise of our ancient (by Canadian publication standards) and often honourable denominational magazine came as a shock. For others, it was almost inevitable.

Are not the print media succumbing to the multiple paths of electronic communication? *Macleans* goes from weekly to monthly. *Chatelaine* to bi-monthly. Other magazines in

the Rogers fold close altogether.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada's membership continues to wither rapidly. Presbyterians Sharing receives less support each year as congregations pare back to survive. Support for an Every Home Plan looks like a troublesome frill. Then too, there are the rising costs of production, distribution and especially postage. But consider.

The *Presbyterian Record* has lost money before. In fact, it was subsidized from general denominational funds for most of its long existence. In the late 1970s, in one of our periodic national crises, I (the then-editor, newly

affirmed) was asked to continue publishing without subsidy. I agreed, on the condition that the magazine would keep any profit it made. That condition, being deemed highly unlikely, was agreed to. The *Record* made money for the next 20 years at least.

Am I hinting that I could have prevented the *Record's* end? That is, of course, a temptation—and a vain one, but let me beat about no bushes, especially burning ones. Was it necessary to expand the editorial staff from two to four? And there are four other positions listed on the masthead where there were once two. The magazine was at least as big as it is now.

In our quest for self-support it took a while before we could afford coated stock (shiny paper). Even then it was not of as high a quality as it has been. That said, I hasten to say that the magazine's look—layout and design—improved radically under both of my successors. But that hasn't helped.

To refrain from picking any more nits, I see something more fundamental, more ominous in the fall of the denomination's print flagship. When I first came to the *Record* over three decades ago, the Presbyterian Church had already suffered 13 straight years of membership decline. When I asked one of the prominent members at church offices how or why this could be, he replied: "Just dead wood." The membership has undergone an accelerated fall every year (but one) since. Some forest.

Since then I have been asked as editor and later as congregational minister to promote no less than 12 national renewal campaigns focused on money or growth or both at the same time. Not one has made an appreciable difference.

This has led, of course, to financial straits. I am told that the givings to Presbyterians Sharing have dropped by roughly \$1 million in just over five years. People don't want to give to the central plant when the plumbing at the

local franchise is leaking.

Collateral damage. Under the agreement that the *Record* operate without subsidy, we were empowered to charge the boards and committees of the national church for their advertisements in the magazine. That revenue has all but disappeared.

The slide in everything has been accompanied by a drift to a congregationalist mentality. It has been a constant temptation. "You in your small corner and I in mine," has never been a principle of Reformed Protestantism. Presbytery has the full authority of a bishop (as in the Episcopal churches) though that authority is vested collectively in a balance between lay and clerical representatives. Yet too many congregations look upon presbytery as a meddling nuisance and too many presbyteries are afraid to act with authority, fearful of controversy. Such debate as exists becomes a vituperative, sometimes vicious shouting match between "the faithful" and "the enlightened."

All the while, widely accessible national avenues for discussion either close (the *Record*) or are fragmented into websites, blogs and e-mails. Given the probability that the demographics of the Presbyterian Church in Canada indicate a low response, at least at home, to the new electronic media, where will any centre of communication arise? In time, this will change but how much time do we have?

The technological revolution has made it possible for a small publisher to exist if there exists a base market and some distribution outlet. The break-even point at the smallest level is low. But Presbyterian Publications is a distant memory and the Book Room (sales and distribution) has been closed. For that matter, how many book reviews have you read in the *Record*?

We seem determined to shut ourselves down and up when, as I believe, our place at the ecumenical table

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

January, 1987



(or within Christ's body, the Church) was given to the people who thought it central to give reason for the faith that is in you (2 Timothy 4:2-3). It might have made them "stodgy" but it made them solid.

What is our place among other churches now? All in the Western hemisphere have undergone decline. Some have kept their magazines alive and vital. But what are we doing, contributing, daring, that's different, innovative or even intelligently contrarian?

Denial—happy days are not only here again, they have never left! Name dropping the persons of the Trinity, who somehow are always on the same path as we are, and the refusal to address the ultimate questions. "Why do we maintain our existence and for what?" Or "What are we doing that no one else is doing quite as much?" (or maybe even doing it better) leaves us lamenting the end of our magazine—but, even more, of what we once were but haven't the mental acuity or the strength of will to sustain. We risk becoming a bookmark in the pages of Canadian church history. ☛

Rev. James Ross Dickey was the Record's editor from 1978-1988.



Molly, age 10,
Knox, Waterloo, Ont.

Going for a Walk

Exegeting a congregation. *text and photos by* **ANDREW FAIZ**

REV. JANET RYU-CHAN **STARTED** the day with a body prayer—a prayer we pray with the body, not with words.

“You take your hands,” she started, “and face them down. Then face them up. Then wrap your arms around yourself. And then spread your arms. And repeat ...

“So ... breathe in, breathe out, exhale for eight counts, and inhale for four counts. We breathe in, one, two, three, four, and exhale, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, and inhale, one, two, three, four, palms down.

Lord, we may imagine the foot of the cross, or a shoreline as the waves come to us, and we send out to you anything that might be weighing on us. We entrust it all to you, in a moment of silence ...

“Lord, we face our palms to heaven as a sign of our trust in you. Lord, we know you are with us in this moment, space and time, so fill us, Lord, in a moment of silence ...

“Lord, we wrap our arms around ourselves as an act of gratitude for the love you generously give to us ...

"Lord, we take our arms and spread them apart as a call to spread your word, to make disciples of all whom we encounter."

We did it again—breathe in, breathe out, long exhale, short inhale, palms down, palms up, wrapped arms, spread arms—in silence. A prayer expressed by the body, after the body has been cleansed to utter the prayer.

And then we went for a walk.

Almost a dozen from Morningside-High Park, Toronto, had met at the church on a Saturday in June to go for a walk around the immediate neighbourhood. There was no real agenda, other than to see what the neighbourhood looked like.

Morningside-High Park, like so many churches, is in transition. Rev. Ryu-Chan came on as minister this January. There are new members who do not live within walking distance—I'm one, for example. Others on the walk included Elaine and Sharon, two sisters, who moved to this church after their Presbyterian church closed.

Jack still lives in the house his parents bought in the '50s; he became a member two decades ago. Lauren and his family joined eight years ago; Marc, and his family, a while earlier. Both families have been active members since. Emily moved out of the local area recently and was a part of the church family for a while. And Hildy came to Morningside-High Park through her husband, whose family has been involved in the community for decades.

Just our touring group, then, represents a church in transition, with some veterans, some recent leaders, and some newbies.

We were on an exegetical walk of the neighbourhood. Exegesis is to interpret; it's what the minister does from the pulpit with the Bible, interpreting the text. In the same way an exegetical walk is to interpret the neighbourhood.

The idea is to walk around without



Elaine Durette, Marc Dunn, Sharon Weber, Hildy Stollery, Zahra Faiz, Rev. Dr. Kevin Livingston, Jack Slaughter, Rev. Janet Ryu-Chan, Lauren Matheson, on Ellis Ave.

making any assumptions about the neighbourhood. As a group we observe, see what we see and talk about it. I got the idea of taking my own congregation through this exercise after I had participated in a similar one with Rev. Dr. Kevin Livingston, a specialist in evangelism and pastoral ministry, and a professor at Tyndale Seminary. He does these walks with his students at Knox Spadina, Toronto, where he was senior minister before joining the academy.

Livingston takes his Tyndale students on a walk around Knox, which is located at the corner of Spadina Ave. and Harbord St. Each direction from the church could be a different mission focus for the church. Face south, and there's Chinatown. "And that symbolically represents a whole facet of ministry to new immigrants," he says. Knox was home to the first Chapel Place, now in Markham, Ont., serving Arabic-speaking Christians, and also to the Koreans when they first arrived.

Looking west are pockets of urban poverty. The Christian Reformed Church has the Lighthouse Ministry on Bloor, for example. Knox itself initiated Evangel Hall and still runs an Out of the Cold program.

"Face north," says Livingston, "towards a more typical middle class

neighbourhood, where there are ministries and programs, youth groups and big parking lots. So, for some people at Knox the ministry is to become more like a large community church, a big preaching ministry.

"But for many others, the ministry was to face east. What's literally across the street from Knox Spadina? The largest university in Canada. Knox historically had a long connection with campus Christian ministries, like InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. In fact, the very first Urbana, the mission conference that began after the Second World War, was held not in Urbana, Illinois, after which it was named, but at Convocation Hall, at the University of Toronto and the sanctuary of Knox Church. It had a student focus."

Where you stand, and where you face, Livingston says, can determine the congregation's mission. Campus? New immigrants? Urban poor and needy? Or the leafy suburbs?

Morningside-High Park sits at the top of a hill on Ellis Ave. From the sidewalk, going south on Ellis, we saw beautiful century homes, some renovated. These would all be worth close to a million dollars or more. Jack, our local historian, pointed out that >

behind some leafy bushes were massive mansions for very successful business tycoons. There's at least one entertainment celebrity as well, and well known politicians.

At the bottom of Ellis is The Queensway, and just beyond that, across the rail tracks, Lakeshore Blvd. Tucked in-between these two major and busy thoroughfares is a new condo and townhome development with young professionals.

Stopping right there, we asked: Is our mission to the wealthy? Or is it to the young people starting their careers and families? The Presbyterian Church in Canada has done well serving both demographics. Young families are the lifeblood of freshly planted churches. And the rich too need the grace and community of God's love.

A tycoon, William Rennie, who at the turn of the 20th-century had a successful seed business, built Morningside-High Park. He donated time, money and land, not only to the Presbyterian Church, but also to the local village of Swansea, atop which the church would sit. Morningside-High

**These are the
urban poor, the
new immigrants,
the down-on-their-
luck. This area too
is ripe for mission
work—homework
or drop-in for the
kids, perhaps.**

Park was rooted by wealth.

We walked west—to the east is High Park, one of Canada's largest urban parks—the homes a little more modest, until we came to a large subsidized housing complex. These are the urban poor, the new immigrants, the down-on-their-luck. This area too is ripe for mission work—homework or

drop-in for the kids, perhaps. Turning north we came upon a senior's centre, another mission possibility.

We walked for two hours; the neighbourhood changed subtly block to block. It was only by walking we could see that. We even met the local municipal councillor, watering her front yard. She told us about municipal projects and programs she's working on. Again, more mission potentials for the congregation to either initiate or join.

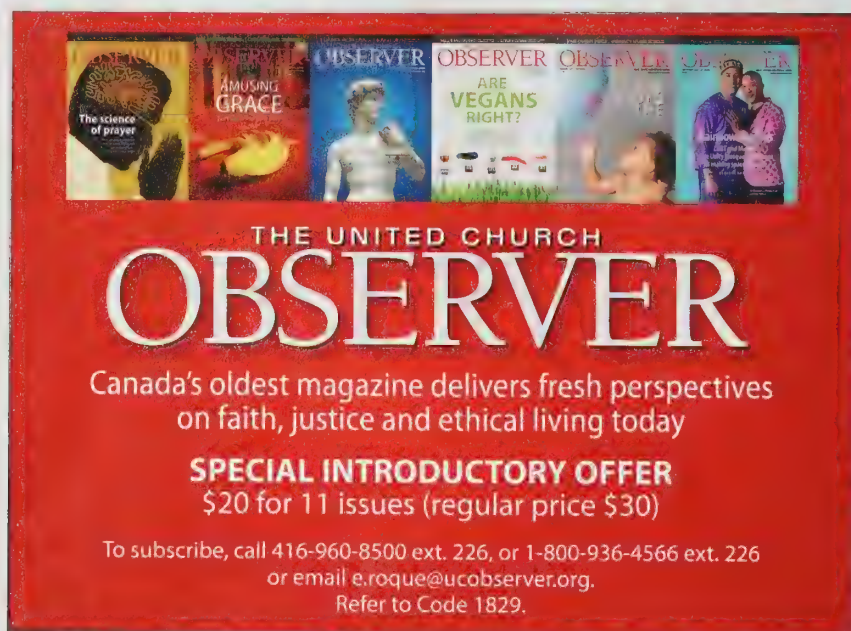
We saw a neighbourhood in transition. What was once the village of Swansea is known to most Torontonians as Bloor West. An old identity is fading. And Bloor West was known for decades as an Eastern European neighbourhood. That too is changing. The old world delis are giving way to coffee shops and bakeries.

Neighbourhoods, communities, congregations change over time; they morph from one thing into another. Missions also shift with the needs of a community. And none of these are monolithic. As Kevin Livingston pointed out, Knox has been involved in missions in all four directions. That church too has been involved in redefining its mission focus over the past few years.

What all this means for Morningside-High Park we don't know yet. It's raw data that has to be filtered through the changes occurring within the congregation itself. It will take time. Perhaps lots of it.

Later the next week several of us from the walk met at the church to share our impressions. We all knew of each other, of course. We'd nodded to each other during coffee hour, shared the peace during worship. But we really didn't know each other. So, while we were meant to talk about our exegetical notes, we ended up introducing ourselves to each other.

Mission is a reflection of the whole congregation. But for most congregations, its parts rarely coalesce. Listening to the others talk about their



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faith journeys, what church has meant to them, how they do or do not yet fit into Morningside-High Park, was a lesson in understanding that the first step to mission is to look inside.

Our exegetical walk led to a more intimate introduction. It wasn't done in any formal way, and certainly not with a representative cross section of the congregation, but ... small steps.

Mission is not what a congregation does, it is what a congregation is. And that often is the most difficult challenge. Perhaps our mission



Rev. Dr. Kevin Livingston greets local municipal councillor Sarah Doucette, as Rev. Ryu-Chan, Jack Slaughter and Marc Dunn look on.

lies in getting to know the challenging journeys and carrying the heavy baggage of those who come across the church threshold. Change is only scary if we are unwilling to be affected. It is exciting if we meet the new faces in our midst.

Morningside-High Park is no longer the tycoon's church. And that is very exciting. Breathe in, breathe out, long exhale, short inhale, palms down, palms up, wrapped arms, spread arms. Amen. ☕

Andrew Faiz is the Record's senior editor.



ST. ANDREW'S HALL

expresses deep gratitude to *The Presbyterian Record* for such faithful Christian Witness since 1876.





Changers

Finding a faith that makes a difference.

by AMY MACLACHLAN

I MET SHANE CLAIBORNE last December in New Orleans. I was there for a conference on stewardship, and it was the first in a string of events I've attended in the past year.

Hosted by the Ecumenical Stewardship Center, the New Orleans conference was one of the best I've been to, small yet meaty, and interviewing Claiborne was the gravy on top.

If you followed my Ordinary Radical column in 2015, you'll know that I'm quite taken with Claiborne and his book, *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*. In it he talks about his vision for living in community and a reordering of society that more closely reflects what God intended for creation.

Hearing him speak for the first time in New Orleans, I was struck by his Tennessee drawl and his goofy, hearty laugh—something that followed his one-liners and numerous funny stories. A loose bandana tied over messy hair, baggy brown pants that he sewed himself, and a black hoodie helped him look the part of his Simple Way persona. Claiborne, of course, founded and lives at The Simple Way, an intentional, interdependent community in inner-city Philadelphia.

"I'm always careful not to prescribe how to live, but I can identify trends or threads of the gospel that call us to different things," Claiborne told me. "There is the sense that family is bigger than biology. A lot of our neighbourhood families [in our community in Philadelphia] are blended—dad is locked up; mother suffers with an addiction, whatever. And we become family."

The central theme in Claiborne's message of justice is relationship; that our world's many ills can be solved if people—particularly people from different social strata—simply take the time to get to know each other. >

Erin Dougall,
age 12, Knox, Waterloo, Ont.

COVER STORY, continued

"I think we overthink a lot of the opportunities that are available," he said. "I met a suburban couple once who were really putting into practice Jesus' words to love your neighbour as yourself, and for them that meant they would create a scholarship fund for a kid [in need] for every one of their biological kids they sent to college. And it was done in the context of relationship; they got to know the family and the kid. It was a symbiotic relationship."

Of course not everyone has the means to give other people's kids a post-secondary education, but this sort of creative thinking—of doing what you can with what you've been given—is central to Claiborne's community work.

"I think a lot of times, the obstacle is not generosity, it's relationship. And people don't know where to start. It may be good for us to be the minority sometimes. That makes us uncomfortable at first, but ... it broadens your outlook on life, and our kids are better off for it."

He tells of a group of home-schooling moms who, as part of a class for their kids, went to the park to eat with the homeless people there.

"It turned out to be a class on justice," said Claiborne, his voice growing more animated as he tells the story. "In a city where it's against the law to feed the homeless, these moms were telling their kids to do what's right even if the laws are wrong. I wouldn't have thought traditional, home-schooling moms would be going to go meet people on the street—and they were not going to feed them, but to eat with them."

Claiborne is an only child; his dad died of multiple sclerosis when he was just nine years old, and his first stepdad "wasn't so great" and left the family after a short time. His current stepfather, who has been with his mom for 20 years, "is a great, great dude," and he's close with his mom.

"My family were always very incredibly generous people. I learned that from them."

Kelly Johnson was the second keynote speaker at the conference in New Orleans. She's a professor at the University of Dayton and author of *The Fear of Beggars: Stewardship and Poverty in Christian Ethics*. She agreed that family plays an important role in cultivating a true

spirit of generosity and hospitality in children.

"It's really about what the parents do," she said. "It's the air they breathe.

"It's about listening to what others need, rather than 'I've got something that will fix you.' And kids pick up on it."

And then she said something that has stayed with me:

"We have to say, 'I'm not expecting you to be the person who goes out and fixes the world; I'm expecting you to be someone who goes out and listens, and to let people into your heart.'"

Our world's
many ills can be
solved if people—
particularly
people from
different social
strata—simply
take the time
to get to know
each other.

THE NEXT TIME I SAW CLAIBORNE it was at the Way of the Heart conference—an international event held just outside Toronto last June, marking the 20th anniversary of author Henri Nouwen's death.

Claiborne spoke of much of the same—the need for community and relationships; the need to move outside our comfort zones and forge friendships with those we normally would not associate with.

But this time, on the University of Toronto at Mississauga campus, Claiborne's words took a different spin, modelled after Nouwen's common refrain of bearing fruit and being authentic—of showing our weaknesses. In so

doing, we create the close relationships needed for real change.

"We can't pretend to be perfect," said Claiborne. "We need to own our brokenness. Our bruises and scars can be our credentials."

Carolyn and Geoff Whitney-Brown, authors of *The Road to Peace*, were neighbours of Nouwen's when he lived at L'Arche Daybreak in Toronto. (Founded by Jean Vanier, L'Arche communities bring people who are living with various disabilities together with those who are not.) They were also workshop speakers at the event. "Henri knew that the [awful] stuff in your life—your weakness, your suffering, your sin—is what makes you human. It's what connects you to others. It's what makes you real. And it's what transforms you."

"Perfection," they said, "is being on the journey."

Living from a place of authenticity then, and seeking relationships that are equally real, is what allows change to take place. It invites others into your life, and seeks to be a

part of theirs. Then, when you see your neighbour and friend suffering, when you know they are victims of violence or injustice or hunger, you act to change it. In Claiborne's words: "It messes you up."

"Jesus never asked us to be productive," Claiborne said, quoting Nouwen. "He asked us to be fruitful. And fruit comes out of broken ground. When we live our lives in love, we can trust that we will bear fruit."

"The world is longing for Christians who are filled with love," he continued. "Find one person who you can love well. We do for one person what we wish we could do for everyone."

I SAT AT THE BACK of Fourth Presbyterian Church in downtown Chicago at the tail end of September. It was a Eucharist service with Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber presiding. From my viewpoint, at the edge of the ridiculously long aisle that made me want to get married again just so I could walk down it, when I looked all the way to the end, there stood Bolz-Weber. A Lutheran minister at the House for All Sinners and Saints in Denver, and author of *Accidental Saints: Finding God in All the Wrong People*, she's about six feet tall in her chunky heels. She's wearing faded skinny jeans, a black, sleeveless shirt and clerical collar; a stole is draped around her neck as she presides over the sacrament. Her hair is dark and closely cropped. Dark-rimmed glasses frame her face. And tattoos. The tattoos! Standing against the imposing and uber-traditional organ and altar of Fourth Presbyterian, the result is almost comical. Yet reverent. The ultimate juxtaposition. I didn't take a photo. It seemed invasive. But I wish I had. The new standing amidst the old—modern and radical set before the staid and stuffy.

I was in Chicago for the Why Christian conference—an event about welcoming. About openness. About honesty. About all the people of God.

"This is an open table, without exception," Bolz-Weber announced before the sacrament began, almost daring someone to say anything different. "Because it's not our table, it's Jesus' table."

Numerous speakers shared their personal, and often harrowing stories during the two days of the conference. Women sharing stories about being women. Black women sharing stories about being black. Men sharing stories of once being women. Gay men sharing stories of being violated, abused, raped. Of being hurt by others.

Of being hurt by the church.

Not exactly light stuff.



Amy MacLachlan with
Shane Claiborne

But the sharing of these stories, these heartbreaking experiences, are exactly what Claiborne and Nouwen stressed as so dearly important.

"We're not the sheep who never stray," said Bolz-Weber. "But the jagged edges of our humanity are what connect us to God and to others. It gives us something to grab on to."

It's difficult, of course, to share these jagged parts of ourselves.

"But the truth is still the truth, whether we hide it or not," she said.

"Why am I Christian?" Bolz-Weber asks. "Because I believe that the self that God has a relationship with is my actual self."

I can't help but come back to Claiborne's words, and his absolute insistence on real, vulnerable, reciprocal relationship as the key to the creation of the kingdom—right here and right now.

"I think what we all need is a group of people to journey with, who keep stirring us on," he said. "Community is about surrounding yourself with people who are like what you want to become. So if you want to be more courageous, hang out with courageous people; if you want to be more generous, hang out with generous people. We need to seek those relationships out—especially with people who have different social, cultural, economic backgrounds than us—that's how we see better. Love's made complete among us, and community is a big part of it."

Simply put: "It's a Christianity that looks like Jesus again." +

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's managing editor.

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

Dear Friends of the Presbyterian Record,

It is with both profound sadness and joy that I am writing this note. This is the last issue of our beloved magazine, and it is extremely difficult to say goodbye. The *Record* has been just that—a record of the joys, struggles and sorrows of the Presbyterian readers it served.

Voices are now diminished in the denomination.

But there is also joy—joy that readers have told us how much the magazine meant to them and their walk with God as members of the Presbyterian Church. And joy that we know we did our best.

You did your best, too. And for that we are immensely grateful. Thank you to all of you named here and to our anonymous donors. You extended the *Record's* life by many years.

Well done, good and faithful servants!

Yours sincerely,



DAVID HARRIS, PUBLISHER

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FROM THE MODERATOR

Consumeatur

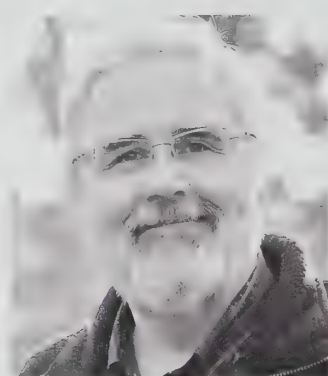
The Lord dwells in our midst. *by* DOUGLAS ROLLWAGE

WITH THE PASSING of the *Presbyterian Record*, one more branch no longer burns on the Presbyterian Church in Canada bush. It joins many others which have slowly, gradually, smouldered and died—once-strong congregations, missions, agencies, programs. Our motto is *Nec Tamen Consumeatur*—Not, However, Consumed—but at this rate of consumption, one wonders for how long.

It is an odd image, this burning bush. It originates, of course, with Moses and the revelation he received way back in Exodus 3: “And, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.” As an emblem for the Presbyterian Church, the Scots trace it back to printer George Mossman, who included it in his title page of the Acts and Proceedings of 1691. It is possible that he got the idea from the French Huguenots, who adopted the image in 1583 as their official seal. And their source? John Calvin himself.

Calvin, seeing in the miraculous bush a powerful symbol of the Church, says in his *Commentary on Acts*: “Neither is there any thing which keepeth it from being consumed to ashes, save this, because the Lord dwelleth in the midst thereof.”

What matters here is that whether you trace the burning bush and accompanying motto back to George Mossman, the Huguenots, or Calvin, you are tracing back to an age when the church was not operating from a position of strength, but from a position of considerable uncertainty. Presbyterians in 1690 Scotland were experiencing division as the unhappy Covenanters,



As the church,
we need to focus
our worship
and our work
on Jesus Christ.

refusing to join the Church of Scotland, broke away. The 1583 Huguenots were embroiled in the French Wars of Religion, which saw incredible persecution and the death of millions. And Calvin, whose *Commentary on Acts* dates to 1552, was in the midst of the difficult “Crucible Years” in Geneva, where not only the future of the Reformed Church was in the balance, but Calvin himself had recently suffered the loss of his beloved wife, Idelette.

And yet *Nec Tamen Consumeatur* they proclaimed, in the very sign, seal

and symbol of their faith: struggling, yes; divided, yes; future uncertain, yes; but there is a future in which they hoped, in which we hope, “because the Lord dwelleth in the midst thereof.”

In the face of division, in the face of persecution, in the face of confusion and turmoil and loss, the hearts of the faithful turned to God, and focused on God’s presence in their midst. And this needs to be our focus, too, if we are not to follow the once-*Presbyterian Record* into the realm of memory. We have had many foci in the recent past, priorities which however worthy have sometimes served to draw our attention away from our primary focus, our primary purpose, our primary identity. We are the church—“one, holy, catholic, and apostolic”—“Christ together with his people called both to worship and to serve him in all of life.” (*Living Faith* 7.1.1-7.1.5) As the church, we need to focus our worship and our work on Jesus Christ. As the writer of Hebrews put it (12:1-2): “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.”

Struggling, yes. Divided, I pray not. Future uncertain: No. Not if we refocus our faith, our priorities, our energy. For then as now, “the Lord dwelleth in the midst thereof.” *Nec Tamen Consumeatur*, indeed. ☩

Rev. Douglas Rollwage is minister at Zion, Charlottetown.

People & Places

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ST. PAUL'S, KEMPTVILLE, ONT.

People were giving thanks for the beautifully decorated sanctuary at St. Paul's this Thanksgiving. It's the handiwork of these talented members of the decorating team: Leslie Claxton, Colleen Dibb and Bea McHale.



BURNS, MOSA, ONT.

On July 10, Rev. Charlotte Brown (left) baptized four children at an outdoor worship service on the lawn, with a backdrop of grazing cattle and singing birds. The newly baptized kids are Audrey, daughter of Sarah and Zack Faulds, and Ainsley, Tavish and Callum, children of Melanie and Andrew Clendinning. Audrey's twin sisters, Sophie and Anela, joined their family for the picture.



KNOX, OSHAWA, ONT.

Members at Knox said they felt God's presence more keenly when they were in a natural setting, where the beauty of God's creation is evident. So the church began experimenting with "Reflections in the Park," a mid-week time of meditation and prayer in a city park a few blocks from the church building. The gatherings have grown in frequency and popularity over the past two years.



ST. GILES KINGSWAY, TORONTO

In November, St. Giles celebrated a few anniversaries. It celebrated the 66th anniversary of the congregation, and the milestone anniversaries of some of its longtime members. Pictured are Roy and Donald Bridge who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary, Sam and Yunice Min who celebrated their 55th, Rev. Tim Bruneau, the minister, and Kay and Murray Dow who celebrated their 60th. Happy anniversary to all!

THE OTHER SIX DAYS

It's Been Fun

Remember to smile! *by* **BRADLEY CHILDS**

FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW I have been submitting this little column. At times it's serious and at others it's goofy. But it has always been a privilege. I believe my contribution has been to challenge the notion of what the church is and to ask what the church does; especially when it's not Sunday (hence Andrew Faiz's clever title, *The Other Six Days*). In recent times, there has been a heavy exploration of Christian satire. That is not accidental. I believe that satire is a powerful tool of introspection. In particular, Christian satire teaches us to take God more seriously and at the same time to not take ourselves too seriously. What we laugh at when we laugh at ourselves makes us examine why, and so we examine ourselves and our beliefs. Not to put too fine a point on it but... it is good to laugh.

This reality is not at all lost on the scriptures. The Bible is full of comedy, word play, political satire, insults and innuendo. It's funny when Elijah suggests to the Baal worshippers that their god is not answering their prayers because he is on the potty. (1 Kings 18:27) In a line which might easily be applied to your local teenagers, Proverbs 19:24 states: "Lazy people take food in their hands but can't be bothered to even lift it to their mouths." Tell me that insult didn't make you smile a little bit? The parables of Jesus, too are filled with oddities at which his original audience no doubt laughed.

In 1 Samuel 21:15-16, David

It's comedy
and faith and
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little ball. It's life.

It's The Other Six
Days. So what is
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you to find out.
Delve into God's
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Ask questions.

pretends to be insane in front of the king of Gath who responds with: "Am I so short of crazies that you have to bring to me another?" That's funny, people! Go read the 22nd chapter of 1 Kings. It's hilarious! In it, Israel's king needs to know if he will win a battle but refuses to see the prophet

saying, "I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad." This is then confirmed after a bit of trickery at the end of the story as verse 18 tells us. It concludes: "Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad!" Go read that story and tell me it isn't funny!

Or what about Jonah? We are talking about a book where absolutely everything obeys the Lord. From the pagan sailors to the wind and waves, to the rain and the fish, to the "evil Ninevites," they all obey the Lord. Even the plants and bugs obey the Lord! You know who doesn't? Our hero, Jonah! He's an angry, whiney, crybaby. Read Jonah again with that in mind. It will be a whole new book to you. It's comedy and faith and introspection all wrapped up in a nice little ball. It's life. It's *The Other Six Days*.

So what is the church and what does it do all week? That's for you to find out. Delve into God's word. Practice what you preach. Ask questions. Don't have orthodoxy (right belief) without orthopraxy (right actions) and don't have either of those without orthokardia (a right heart). Take God more seriously and yourself less so. And for the love of God's people, Presbyterians don't need to have steel in our veins where blood should be. Crack a smile once in a while. ☕

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at Fairview, Vancouver.

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Ministry

Opportunities

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Miramichi (Chatham), N.B., Calvin; Black River Bridge, St. Paul's; Kouchibouquac, Knox; Full-time minister for a three-point charge; Interim Moderator Rev. Jeffrey M. Murray, 36 Bridge St., Sackville, NB E4L 3N7; 506-536-3311; revjeff@nb.sympatico.ca.

St. John's, Nfld., St. David's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Derek Krunys; 709-687-7742; stdavids.nf.ca.

Stanley, N.B., St. Peter's; seeking a full-time minister; Interim Moderator Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1M2; 507-455-8220; debblaikie@gmail.com.

Tabusintac, N.B., St. John's; New Jersey, Zion; and Bartibog Bridge, St. Matthew's; Full-time three-point charge; Interim Moderator Rev. J. Gillis Smith, 535 King George Hwy., Miramichi, NB E1V 1N2; rachmsmi@nbnet.nb.ca.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Beaconsfield, Que., Briarwood; Minister who is able to work with all ages, connect with young families, strong communicator and teacher of the Christian faith; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries; 514-288-5256 extension 209; rdevries@presbyteriancollege.ca; profile at briarwoodpresbyterianchurch.ca.

Pointe-Claire, Que., St. Columba by-the-Lake; Full-time minister able to relate the gospel to

contemporary life and to foster a spirit of faith and compelling witness in an open, inclusive, dynamic community; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Kay Diviney; 514-842-3431; assocminister@standrewstpaul.com; see also stcolumba.ca.

Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

Caledon, Claude; Part-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Rebekah Mitchell, 44 Church St. E., Brampton, ON L6V 1G3; 647-969-5456; mitchrr@gmail.com; congregational profile available at claudechurch.com/ministry-opportunity.html.

Guelph, Duff's; seeking a forward-thinking, full-time minister to provide strong leadership, preach to the practicalities and encourage new forms of worship, music and ministry; Interim Moderator Rev. Bill Bynum, c/o Duff's Presbyterian Church, 319 Brock St. S., Guelph ON N1H 6H9; congregation's profile available on church's website, the Ministry & Church Vocations website and from the Interim Moderator.

Scarborough, Melville; an established and vibrant congregation has an immediate opening for an organist/pianist/choir director; Chair Personnel Committee, c/o Melville Presbyterian Church, 70 Old Kingston Rd., Scarborough ON M1E 3J5; 416-283-7719 (fax); melville_church@bellnet.ca; copy of posting available through church office at 416-283-3703.

Toronto, Armour Heights; seeking two leaders—welcome individual as well as team applications and flexible to a part-time arrangement; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Nicholas Athanasiadis, 670 Eglinton Ave. E., Toronto ON M4G 2K4; 416-422-0510 extension 23; nick@leasidepresbyterianchurch.ca; congregational profile available at armourheights.org.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Chatham, First; Part-time director of music. Role supports one weekly church service on Sundays, a weekly choir practice as well as several additional services throughout the year. We are also willing to discuss alternate arrangements whereby two individuals share the responsibilities for this role; for a complete job description or to submit an application contact Ed McLachlin, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 60 Fifth St., Chatham ON N7L 5V7; eamclachlin@gmail.com; firstchatham.org.

Innerkip, Innerkip; near Woodstock is a thriving congregation seeking an executive pastor who is a strategic thinker with the ability to lead, encourage and celebrate an extremely gifted staff of eight; session is policy, vision oriented and committed to the historic living gospel of Jesus Christ; for a job description please send your profile or resume to innpresb@execulink.com or stan.cox@sympatico.ca.

Owen Sound, St. Andrew's; Music director/organist; Part-time position directing choir and accompanying on organ and piano; see full description standrewsowensound.org.

Simcoe, St. Paul's; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Stanley Cox, 65 Tan Ave., Waterford, ON N0E 1Y0; 519-443-4798; stan.cox@sympatico.ca; sppc@kwic.com; visit website stpaulssimcoe.com.

Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

No vacancies submitted.

Synod of Saskatchewan


Regina, First; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Devon Pattemore, 66 Park St., Yorkton, SK S3N 0T3; 306-782-2066; revdev78@sasktel.net.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Calgary, Alta., Centennial; Interim Moderator Rev. Ena van Zoeren; 403-830-5662; enavanz@gmail.com.

Calgary, Alta., Varsity Acres; Interim Moderator Rev. Kobus Genis; 403-999-3435; kobus@wpchurch.net.

Synod of British Columbia

Parksville, St. Columba; Seeking a dynamic full-time minister of word and sacraments; Interim Moderator Rev. Jennifer Geddes; 250-218-5465; revjenn@gmail.com. 

Knox Presbyterian Church, Kincardine

is seeking an enthusiastic, energetic individual to serve as our Director of Music. Applicants must have an appreciation of the importance of music as a part of Christian Ministry, and an ability to work well with people of various ages and skill levels.

Duties will include: selection of appropriate music for the Worship Service in consultation with the Church Minister, direction of the Church Choir during Worship Services and weekly practice sessions, recruitment of new Choir members and the ability to perform at an accredited level on the Church pipe organ and grand piano. Salary will be dependent on qualifications and experience.

For a complete list of duties and expectations please contact the Church Secretary at knoxkincardine@gmail.com with "Music Director" in the subject line or phone 519-396-2311.

APPLICATION/RESUME MAY BE MAILED TO
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
345 DURHAM ST. KINCARDINE, ON N2Z 1Y6
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- personal spiritual growth
- active outreach to our community
- Christian education
- pastoral development and care

We seek two leaders. We welcome individual as well as team applications, and are flexible as to a part time arrangement. Share your vision with us of how we might grow in mission together.

A CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE IS AVAILABLE AT ARMOURHEIGHTS.ORG

Obituaries



Macdonald, Rev. Dr. Lloyd George, died in Bedford, N.S., on January 15, 2016 at the age of 72. Born in New Glasgow, N.S., he grew up on Pictou Island and in Thornburn, Pictou County. After graduation from St. Francis Xavier University, he

studied at McGill University and then at the Presbyterian College, Montreal, from which he graduated in 1974.

On June 11, 1974 he was ordained as a minister by the Presbytery of Pictou at Union Church, Thornburn, N.S. He served as the minister at charges in Port Cartier, Que., and Eckville, Alta.; and then in three charges in the Presbytery of Halifax and Lunenburg: the New Dublin-Conquerall charge which included Knox, Dublin Shore, St. Matthew's, Conquerall Mills, and St. Matthew's, West Dublin, in a shared ministry with three congregations of the United Church of Canada, the First Sackville congregation in Lower Sackville and the Knox congregation in Halifax. He retired in 2007 but served the First Sackville Church until Dec. 31, 2008. Twice the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces elected him as its moderator. In May 2004, the Presbyterian College, Montreal, conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

George was a person of deep faith, a diligent pastor, a talented preacher, a compelling storyteller and a caring friend to many people. A memorial service was held on April 2, 2016 in First Sackville Church, Lower Sackville, N.S., with burial on June 29 in Thornburn Cemetery, Thornburn, N.S. ☩

FOR THE JOURNEY

Snowbirds

A fitting Advent herald. *by* DAVID WEBBER

IT HAPPENS EVERY YEAR at about this time. I am out and about for a last turn round the woods before winter sets in with a vengeance, and there they are. I usually first see them flying in a small flock, a dozen or so sparrow-sized birds. I seldom see them except in flight. They are beautiful in flight, flying in tight formation, all the birds wheeling and turning as one, their brilliant white undersides flashing with each turn as they skim just above the surface of the field or clear-cut opening that I am passing through. Invariably I stop and watch, mesmerized. They will often land on the ground as one bird and when they do I lose sight of them. And then, for whatever reason, they will up and fly again. Taking off in tight formation, they resume their aerobatics at almost ground level. It always seems that the first significant snowfall happens within a few days of my first sighting.

I call them snowbirds, though my bird book informs me that is not their correct common name. They are more properly referred to as snow buntings (*Plectrophenax nivalis*). Some people even call them snowflakes. They arrive with the start of winter and stay with us until they begin their migration to the Arctic in the spring where they will breed and nest and raise their young. They are truly a winter bird, and when they arrive in our area I know that winter has arrived too. I suppose that is why when I first see them flying in formation over a field I am filled with the contrasting feelings of euphoria and angst. Winter's arrival does that to me. I love the season and I dread it. I love its spectacular beauty, its weather challenges and its recreational opportunities. And yet I despise its long, dark nights, its bitter cold winds and its horrid



driving conditions.

The snowbird is for me a harbinger of a season of delight and dread. And not just winter, but Advent. (The words no sooner hit the page and under my breath I find myself uttering, "Now ain't that a caution?")

I must confess that I feel a little odd at Advent time in the Christian church. There seems to be all the talk of joy and exultation with the celebration of the coming of Jesus at this time of year, which I share. But if I am honest, I am also filled with feelings of angst. Because of that, I feel more than a little

out of place in a church that oftentimes seems to be exclusively bent on joyful celebration at this time of year.

But Advent isn't just a pretty picture. At Advent I become deeply aware of the anticipation and joy of a coming Saviour, be it in the past, present or future sense. But I also become acutely aware of my world, twisted and distorted in its struggle with what it needs saving from. At Advent I seem to hear the angel's breath lifted in exuberant song but I also hear the world's breath locked in a death rattle. I sense God's love coming down but also sense God's reluctance to get so terribly bloodied in the world's frantic travail. This tension, both human and divine, makes Advent seem to me to have an element of desperation as well as elation that is so often missed in church these days.

With the snowbirds and the beginning of Advent I am often seeking expressions of the desolate, or perhaps better put, the desperate aspect of the season. I find something is usually needed to round out what often seems a one-dimensional season in church. Christina Rossetti's 1872 poem that eventually became the carol, "In the Bleak Midwinter" is an excellent >

Final Thoughts

FOR THE JOURNEY, continued

At Advent I become deeply aware of the anticipation and joy of a coming Saviour ... But I also become acutely aware of my world, twisted and distorted in its struggle.

expression that captures much of the contrasts of Advent, I think. Its tone accurately captures a sense of desperate anticipation that, for me, Advent is all about. I think I understand why it was such a favourite amongst soldiers in the bitter trenches of the First World War.

Another expression, seldom recited in church but which really ought to be each Advent, is Irish poet W. B. Yeats' poem "The Second Coming." Yeats wrote the poem in the aftermath of the First World War. It is fittingly apocalyptic but at the same time picks up images from Christ's birth. The phrase, "Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born," almost says it all in one line for me. Joni Mitchell did a reprise of the Yeats poem in 1991 on her album, *Night Ride Home*. I offer the whole poem below as a counterpoint to round out your Advent season.

Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is

drowned;

The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity.

*Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.*

The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out

When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi

Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert

A shape with lion body and the head of a man,

A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,

Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it

Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.

The darkness drops again; but now I know

That twenty centuries of stony sleep

Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,

Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born? ➤

Rev. David Webber, now retired, lives in Lac La Hache, B.C.



Merry Christmas to all,
and to all a good night.

—from your friends at
the Presbyterian Record



Bill Richer, age 86, Saanich
Peninsula, North Saanich, B.C.

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